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Fairfax County School Board Meeting, Thursday, May 21, 2026

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- Official School Board page (FCPS): <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board>

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[00:11:38] May 21st, 2026, regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board will now come to order.

[00:13:35] Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence and a performance of the National Anthem by the Spring Hill Elementary School Strong Orchestra under the direction of Margo Mavinsky. I pledge allegiance to the flag.

[00:15:03] One more round of applause for our amazing students.

[00:16:16] If you would like to review a copy of the meeting agenda, please see the back of the auditorium. To obtain any items or supporting materials being presented tonight, please reference the QR code on the agenda or visit www.fcps.edu slash board docs.

[00:16:35] Tonight's meeting is being broadcast on Cox Channel 99, Verizon Fios Channel 11 and live streamed on YouTube and on our website at www.fcps.edu slash live stream. The board would like to recognize the following guests this evening, Virginia House of Delegates member and former Fairfax County School Board member, Karen Keyes-Gamara, and the Honorable Christopher J. Falcon, Fairfax County Clerk of Court.

[00:17:12] We're so glad you guys can be with us tonight. Agenda Item 3.01, I'm going to read this part slowly so that the proclamation isn't quite so noisy. Agenda Item 3.01, Proclamation Honoring Asian

American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

[00:17:31] I call on Mr. McElveen for a proclamation. Thank you, Madam Chair. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders AAPI make up 18.6% of the population in Fairfax County, including over 33,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

[00:17:50] And whereas AAPIs have been immigrating to the United States for hundreds of years with the first documented arrival in Morro Bay and present-day California in the 1500s and today are the fastest growing racial group in the country, increasing in population by 81 percent between 2000 and 2019. And whereas AAPIs have endured such injustices as the Naturalization Acts of 1790 and 1870, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Japanese internment which established concentration camps that incarcerated Asian US citizens from 1942 until 1946 and federal policy

[00:18:28] that prevented immigrants of Asian descent from becoming US citizens and having access to the vote until 1952. And whereas AAPIs continue to experience racism, harassment, employment, discrimination, and hate crimes in disproportionate numbers, including most recently with hate crimes against Asian Americans skyrocketing by 149% in major American cities from 2019 to 2020. And whereas AAPI student needs can get overlooked due to the model minority myth, as evidenced by varying levels of high school dropout against different Asian American subgroups, greater than average incidence of

[00:19:03] limited English proficiency, less return on degree for compensation when entering the labor market, and higher risk of contemplating or attempting suicide amongst AAPI college students. And whereas AAPIs have made significant accomplishments and contributions in all areas of society that have prepared our country and have played a pivotal role in America's history for centuries, and famous AAPIs include Vice President Kamala Harris, Jhumpa Lahiri, Pulitzer Prize winning author, Sal Khan, founder of Khan Academy, A.J. Bhatt, co-inventor of

[00:19:38] of the USB, George Takei, trailblazing Asian-American actor, Chen Xiangwu, known as the First Lady of Physics, Steve Chen, co-founder of YouTube, and Philip Vera Cruz, a Filipino-American labor organizer who worked alongside Dolores Huerta to found the United Farm Workers.

[00:19:57] And whereas Asian-American and Pacific Islander students and their families are an integral and long-standing part of the United States, Virginia, Fairfax County, and Fairfax County public schools, and also reflect the rich and vibrant diversity of cultures, histories, and languages of the many different countries of Asia and the Pacific Islands.

[00:20:15] Now therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board proclaims the observance of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in celebration and recognition of the many contributions Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made to our society. Is there a second?

[00:20:31] Second. Thank you, Miss Lady. I will call for a vote. in favor? Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself. That is unanimous for all board members. Congratulations. Agenda item 3.03, Children's Mental Health and Wellness Month proclamation. I call on Ms. Marin for a proclamation.

[00:21:08] Whereas mental health is health and is integral to every adult's and youth's overall health and well-being, and health and wellness of our children are of paramount importance to the future vitality of our community and nation, mental health conditions are real and prevalent, but stigma and fear of discrimination keep many who would benefit from mental health services from seeking help.

[00:21:27] And whereas while everyone experiences times of difficulty and stress throughout their lives, one in five adults and one in five youth struggle to address a mental health illness or condition in any given year. Fifty percent of lifetime mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75 percent by the age of 25.

[00:21:46] Only half of youth with a mental health condition receive treatment. Early intervention and education are proven strategies that significantly contribute to the development of healthy children who are better equipped to handle the challenges of adolescence and adulthood. And whereas Children's Mental Health and Wellness Month highlights the importance of positive mental health in a child's healthy development, Research also supports positive factors like trusted adults, both within educational settings and in the wider community.

[00:22:12] Connecting with others, being physically active, and seeking professional help when needed play a critical role in supporting the mental and emotional health of our youth. And whereas Children's Mental Health and Wellness Month provides an opportunity to recognize Fairfax County Public Schools' commitment to supporting the whole child and promoting the connection between mental health, well-being, and readiness to learn, and to highlight the importance of access to comprehensive school-based mental health services, including school counselors, school social workers, and psychologists, as well as expanded access to such supports, such as teletherapy, and to elevate student voice through wellness-focused clubs, activities,

[00:22:50] and leadership opportunities, such as the Student Advisory Council. And whereas FCPS implements a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of supports that promotes prevention, early intervention, and responsive services to meet the diverse mental health needs for health and wellness of all students, and whereas FCPS remains committed to offering safe, inclusive, and supported learning environments by promoting social and emotional learning, building resilience and coping skills, reducing stigma, encouraging help-seeking, and partnering with families, staff, and community agencies to ensure equitable access to a coordinated continuum of care for all students.

[00:23:27] Now, therefore, be it resolved, the Fairfax County School Board hereby proclaims May 2026 as Children's Mental Health and Wellness Month, and we urge all members of our community to actively participate in activities that promote children's mental health and wellness throughout the month of May and beyond.

[00:23:43] Let us work together to ensure that every child in Fairfax County public schools has the opportunity to grow, learn, and flourish in a mentally healthy and supportive environment. Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Frisch. I will call for a vote. All those in favor. Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannen, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[00:24:06] That is unanimous for all board members. Agenda 3, Agenda Item 3.03, Speech Language Hearing Month Proclamation. I call on Mr. Dannen for a proclamation.

[00:24:23] Whereas May is recognized as National Speech Language Hearing Month and provides an opportunity to recognize the effect that communication disorders have on millions of Americans and the positive impact that intervention and treatment by trained specialists can have to allow students to meet their full potential.

[00:24:39] And, whereas, communication disorders are among the most common conditions with nearly 1 in 12 American children having a disorder related to voice, speech, language, or fluency, and almost 15% of school-age children experiencing hearing loss in one or both ears. And, whereas, approximately 15,000 FCPS students receive speech-language services, approximately 450 students receive hearing services, and approximately 130 students receive audiological services.

[00:25:06] And whereas, without treatment and supports, communication disorders can negatively affect a student's ability to connect with others and achieve academic success. Whereas, FCPS strives to ensure that all students are included and provided with the education and opportunities that allow them to develop a sense of belonging, build social relationships, and reach their full potential.

[00:25:26] And whereas, FCPS employ speech-language pathologists and speech-language pathology assistants who provide speech and language services that help students to develop effective communication skills and participate in school and later in the workforce. And whereas FCPS provides a continuum of services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, including itinerant services provided by teachers of the deaf, hard of hearing, and educational audiologists at students' neighborhood schools, and site-based services at four schools.

[00:25:53] And whereas FCPS employs 250 speech-language pathologists and speech-language pathologists assistants, 17 audiologists, and 24 teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing. And whereas these specialists dramatically enhance the lives of our students and allow them to meet social and educational goals.

[00:26:10] And now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board hereby proclaims May as National Speech-Language Hearing Month and FCPS to raise awareness about the communication disorders and to recognize the incredibly positive impact that speech-language pathologists, teachers of deaf/hard of hearing, and audiologists have on our students.

[00:26:29] students. Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Fresh. I will call for a vote. All those in favor. Mr. Fresh, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannen, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself. That is unanimous. I would like to welcome all those who are here in support of the Speech Language Hearing Month Proclamation to please

[00:26:58] join the board in the front of the dais for a picture. I would like to welcome all those here

[00:28:31] in support of the Children's Mental Health and Wellness Month Proclamation to please join the

[00:28:35] board for a photo at the front of the dais. I would like to welcome all those

[00:29:42] here in support of the proclamation honoring Asian American and Pacific

[00:29:45] Islander to please join the board for a photo at the front of the dais. Agenda

[00:31:11] item 4.01, resolution dedicating the Hank Novak press box at Justice High School. I call on Dr. Anderson for a resolution. Okay, thank you so very much. Before I get started with my resolution I would like to acknowledge the following individuals who are here with us this evening for this recognition: Mr. James "Jim" Novak, who is the son of Mr. Novak, who I'll be speaking about, and a teacher at Centerville

[00:31:44] High School. Please stand. Ms. Melissa Hall, band director at Centerville High School. Mrs. Nancy Novak Reister, his daughter. Mr. Chris Gilmore, grandson. Ms. Cassidy Cantrell, also a teacher at Orange Hunt, as well as school staff, Ms. O'Brien Garvey, the DSA at Justice

[00:32:19] High School, and Dr. Sean Rolland, who is the principal at Justice High School. Thank you and welcome. Thank you for being here. I moved that the school board approved the following resolution, dedicating the press box at Justice High School to be the Hank Novak press box.

[00:32:40] The naming of this, okay, I don't know what this is. Whereas Mr. Henry A. Hank Novak devoted more than four decades of service to the Jeb Stewart High School slash Justice High School community as their longtime public address announcer for football games.

[00:33:02] and has profoundly impacted generations of students, families, and community members. And whereas his distinctive voice, enthusiasm, and passion brought life to Friday night events, transforming them into meaningful community gatherings that celebrated school spirit, unity, and student achievement, making Friday night football a cherished tradition for generations of students, families, staff, alumni, and community members.

[00:33:35] And whereas, Mr. Novak's contributions extended beyond announcing the action on the field, as he regularly recognized student participants and performances, including the marching band, choral ensemble, cheerleaders, homecoming court, and other elements that made each game a celebration of school spirit and community. And whereas Mr. Novak's dedication, warmth, and attention to detail exemplified the pride, service, and sense of belonging that defined the Justice High School community.

[00:34:13] And whereas the stadium press box at Justice High School served as the platform for Mr. Novak's enduring contributions, making it a place closely tied to his legacy and impact.

[00:34:29] And whereas, it is fitting to honor his memory and extraordinary contributions to Justice High School by dedicating this prominent space in his name so that future generations of students and community members will recognize and remember his lasting influence.

[00:34:48] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board honors Hank Novak with the naming of the Justice High School Stadium Field Press Box as the Hank Novak Press Box in recognition of his 41 years of dedicated service and the lasting impact he made on the students, families, and community at Justice High School.

[00:35:10] Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. McElveen. Dr. Anderson, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes, I would. Thank you so much. First of all, thank you all for being here. I appreciate you being here to celebrate the remarkable contributions of Hank Novak to the Justice High School community. I am pleased to present this resolution, especially as a fan of sports. I am cognizant of the impact of the announcer to the experience at a sporting event. While the resolution reflects Hank's remarkable service to the Justice High School community, the full story of his life is equally distinctive.

[00:35:48] This past fall, Hank passed away at the age of 92 and was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors, a tribute reflective of his distinguished service and rank as lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. Yet, for all he accomplished in uniform, Hank treasured another title just as deeply, that of the voice of the Raiders, now the Wolves. Hank's journey in

[00:36:23] the press box began in a fairly typical fashion. He was just a proud dad who came to support his son, Jim, who played on the football team at the time. What started off as a father cheering on his son became an extraordinary act of volunteer service that spanned more than four decades. Those who worked alongside Hank remember not only his unmistakable voice but also his care and respect that he brought to every game he arrived early carefully reviewed

[00:37:00] the rosters for both teams and practiced their names he believed every student athlete deserved the respect to hear their names pronounced correctly and my name is Riccardi. And when a player crossed the goal line, Hank's signature call, touchdown Raiders, later touchdown Wolves, followed by the firing of the stadium cannon, became part of the rhythm

[00:37:33] and spirit of Friday Night Lights at Justice High School. For 42 seasons, his voice helped to define experience for players, families, alumni, and fans. To the Novak family, thank you for sharing Hank with the community for so many years. His service reflected the very best of what it means to give back faithfully, humbly, and with joy. We are deeply honored that Hank Novak's legacy will live on permanently through the naming of the stadium press box and future generations of now Wolves will

[00:38:10] We'll know the story of the man whose voice became the heart of the school. Thank you. Mr. McElveen, would you like to speak to your second?

[00:38:25] Well, that was a beautiful tribute, Dr. Anderson. My name is pronounced McElveen. But we are so grateful to Mr. Novak and his big family for being here tonight. And for the four decades of service to Fairfax County, it's really our greatest honor to be able to honor him tonight.

[00:38:44] And we know that his voice will certainly still live on in that press box through this honor. So thank you. I will call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[00:39:05] That is unanimous. Agenda Item 4.02, Resolution Honoring National Law Day.

[00:39:22] I call on Dr. Anderson for resolution. Thank you. Before I begin, I would like to recognize two individuals, well, several individuals who are here for this resolution, Delegate Keyes Gamara, the Honorable Clerk of the Court, Chris Falcon, and we have many others from our community who are here for this resolution.

[00:39:42] And I would also say that Julie Strandly, who is not here this evening, as well as Mr. Falcon, have been huge champions of Law Day and of this resolution. So thank you for your work. I moved that the school board approved the following resolution for honoring National Law Day.

[00:40:07] Whereas, Law Day is a day of national dedication to the principles of government under law, as stated by President Dwight Eisenhower, who established the first nationwide commemoration in 1958. And whereas, on April 7, 1961, the United States Congress, by joint resolution, designated May 1 as law day a day of celebration by the people of the United States and rededication to the ideals of equality justice under law and their relations to each other and other countries

[00:40:44] and whereas President John F. Kennedy proclaimed that law is the strongest link between man and freedom and by strengthening the rule of law we strengthen freedom and justice in our own country and contribute by example to the goal of justice under law for all mankind and whereas the United States is celebrating the sequentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence which

[00:41:19] states that all individuals are endowed with certain unalienable rights and chief among them are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness and whereas the theme for the 2026 Law Day is the rule of law and the American dream recognizing that no single person or the government is above the law and that all persons regardless of their status must be treated equally under the

[00:41:52] law and that no one will be denied liberty or property without due process and whereas law day embodies the fcps portrait of a graduate pillar of the ethical and global citizen who understands the foundations of our country and values our rights privileges and responsibilities while demonstrating empathy compassion and respect for others and now therefore be it be resolved that the fairfax county school board recognizes may 2026 in support of law day echoing president

[00:42:30] kennedy's call upon our schools community and businesses to celebrate preserve and strengthen these principles by encouraging participation in law day activities in our schools and sharing of resources to promote the rule of law is there a second second thank you mr dunn dr anderson would you like to speak to your motion yes thank you very briefly i'd like to say a few words in addition to thanking those who have come for this resolution.

[00:43:06] I'd like to reread a section of the resolution, which I believe to be particularly pertinent, especially in current times. This year's Law Day theme is the Rule of Law in the American Dream. That section states that the rule of law recognizes that no single person or government is above the law and that all persons, regardless of their status, must be treated equally under the law and that no one will be denied liberty or property without due process.

[00:43:41] This is especially crucial to emphasize because I believe that current political activities are teaching our young people that the rule of law is not applicable to all and that the government can be weaponized by those in power to settle vendettas or for personal gains.

[00:44:05] Often, the message being shown to our young people these days is that the rule of law does not exist. As an educational enterprise, it is imperative that we respond to the call for action and ensure our students are clear that the rights outlined under the rule of law and the responsibility of those in position of influence to uphold it.

[00:44:30] Recognizing Law Day through activities such as guest speakers is critical to cementing the ideals of an informed citizenry. Law Day is important because it celebrates the rule of law. It reminds us that laws help protect freedom, fairness, and justice in society.

[00:44:50] I am hopeful this resolution will strengthen existing FCPS resources to promote the observance of May 1st each year to encourage our students to learn about the Constitution, our courts, and citizens' rights and responsibilities. Law Day recognizes the rule of law that everyone, including leaders and government officials, must follow. It protects rights and freedoms and that the laws help guarantee rights like free speech, rights like

[00:45:25] voting rights like equal treatment. It encourages civic education to learn how the legal system works and why participation in democracy matters. It supports justice and equality. Law Day highlights the importance of fairness and access to justice for all. It strengthens democracy. A society based

[00:45:51] on laws is more stable, fair, and accountable. Thank you. Mr. Dunn, would you like to speak to your second? Yes, thank you. So Law Day has its origins in the Haymarket Affair, which was a nationwide strike to fight for an eight-hour workday. And the reason we all have 40-hour work weeks, five days times eight hours a day, is because of the sacrifices made by many generations

[00:46:27] of labor organizers. And I'd like to think we can all celebrate that. Rather than enduring 10, 16-hour days in the factory, now we can enjoy eight-hour days and spend more time with our families. But it was transformed in the 1950s after the Soviet Union, the Russian Revolution 1917 and it became something

else and so Law Day was established under Eisenhower originally to contrast the US system of democracy and freedoms and

[00:47:04] individual rights with the communist vision for class struggle and really a contrast with an authoritarian system of government that had come to dominate the peoples of Eastern Europe and many countries in Asia and I think that's that's worth remembering that history not just because I'm a history major but because we face another epochal struggle today between those countries that champion authoritarianism and then the democracy that we are so lucky to have

[00:47:37] in the United States it is fragile and I believe it was Ben Franklin or one of other founders who said you know it's a democracy for as long as it lasts right I'm paraphrasing obviously and each of us each day has to remember that when we travel overseas our constitutional rights don't travel with us and the freedom of speech we have here is not necessarily available outside the borders and so we're all very fortunate to have the opportunity to live a life of individual freedom, a freedom that is at its maximum compared to most countries

[00:48:16] of the world, even those from which, you know, we were settled originally. So I think it's important to remember that and to imbue that into our children because remembering freedom, honoring freedom, and not becoming complacent or apathetic about it is vital to maintaining the crucial fire of liberty, right? It's crucial to maintaining our individual rights. It's always disappointing how few people vote. It's disappointing how few people come to school board meetings because these are the opportunities to influence your elected officials. Everyone here tonight, everyone in the General Assembly,

[00:48:55] everyone in the US Congress. And if we don't exercise our rights then we are doomed to lose them. I believe it was said during the American Revolution if we We can either all hang together or we can all hang separately. And I think that remains true today. So I appreciate my colleague for bringing forward this resolution and enthusiastically encourage everyone to appreciate and celebrate Law Day with their families.

[00:49:22] I will go ahead and call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself. is unanimous. I would like to welcome all those in here in support of the resolution honoring National Law Day to please join the board for a photo in the

[00:49:48] front of the dais. I would like to welcome all those here in support of the

[00:51:01] resolution dedicating the Hank Novak Press Box at Justice High School to

[00:51:06] please join the board for a photo at the front of the dais. Madam Chair that was

[00:52:48] our last resolution picture. Agenda item 5.01 community participation. The next

[00:53:36] order of business is community participation. We welcome all community members who are here and those who have signed up to speak this evening. Additional information about signing up to provide comments at school board regular business meetings and public hearings can be found on the school board's website at www.fcps.edu/schoolboard. During the signup process, community members acknowledge that they were informed of the school board's expectations for proper decorum when providing comments. These expectations are also available online and with the printed agenda in the back of the room.

[00:54:10] We ask audience members to be respectful of one another. Shouting and outbursts will not be tolerated. Please hold your applause until the conclusion of a speaker's remarks. Audience members may not join speakers at the podium and should remain at their seats, including when recording videos or taking photos.

[00:54:28] We are grateful for those who have come to speak to us today and thank you for your cooperation. School board members will be listening but not responding. Madam Clerk, please call the first speaker. Asha Jha. Hi, my name is Asha Jha, and I am a senior at James Madison High School.

[00:54:56] I also lead a chapter of Team Enough, which is a youth-led gun violence prevention organization at my high school. It isn't a surprise that gun violence is a devastating issue that significantly affects students every single day. In fact, it's become the leading cause of death for children and teens, with an increased risk in households that contain a firearm.

[00:55:14] Right now, FCPS helps mitigate the risk of gun violence by sending an email to all parents about firearm-safe storage practices. I believe that it is also imperative that this email is sent to high school students. Primarily, high school students need to be educated on the importance of storing firearms safely.

[00:55:31] I see this personally in my day-to-day life. In fact, I was telling my friend who has a firearm in her house that would be speaking about safe storage today, and her response was, what is safe storage? And she's not alone. According to NPR, as of 2026, 32 million children in the U.S. live in a house with a firearm, with 7 million children living in a household with firearms stored unlocked and loaded.

[00:55:53] As a result, thousands of children aged 17 and under gain access to a gun and unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else, many times fatally, according to every town. High schoolers are impressionable and are about to become adults, who will soon be able to purchase these firearms themselves. We have to instill this knowledge in them now before they become adults, because it's a key element of safely owning a gun, and they'll be a lot more receptive to adopting these practices now than later.

[00:56:18] It is also very easy for this crucial email to get lost in parents' inboxes that are filled with hundreds of other school notices and personal obligations. A student receiving this email increases the likelihood that a family member will gain awareness of safe storage practices which can tremendously reduce the chances of an accidental shooting or mishandling of a gun that leads to injury.

[00:56:39] In a country where we have more guns than people, it is extremely important to spread gun violence prevention education and extending this email to high school students would be a huge step in doing so by FCPS.

[00:57:00] Cole Doubling. Good evening.

[00:57:15] My name is Cole Doubling and I am currently a junior at Oakton High School. I would like to discuss the possibility of implementing a journalism course mandatory for every Fairfax County public high school to offer. I have recently been writing about the importance of free speech in the media, specifically in academic settings like a school newspaper.

[00:57:35] When applying this to FCPS, I began to look into the limitations within journalism classrooms. However, I couldn't get very far for a troubling reason. In this county alone, there are 29 high schools. From the 25 school course catalogues I could access online, only 14 offered a standard journalism course.

[00:57:55] That leaves 11 high schools, about 13,200 students without the beneficial skills of the class. This is a well-rated school district, constantly scored as one of the top 10 statewide. So why does it not guarantee one of the most practical courses available in education?

[00:58:15] I'm sure we've all seen the statistic that only 37% of the information that is learned in schools is utilized in real life, but the skills taught in journalism classes are essential in every part of life and will most certainly be used in a student's future.

[00:58:30] Journalism does not just teach students to write. It teaches them to speak with confidence, to question ideas, and to think for themselves, which is especially important in this day and age. Since course selections for this upcoming school year have finished, I believe the best course of action would be to implement this before the 2027-2028 school year begins.

[00:58:51] But right now, I'm simply asking this board to consider the notion. Let's not leave 13,200 students behind when the solution is very clearly within our reach. Thank you for your time. Vasiliki Hatsiani.

[00:59:14] Hello. My name is Vasiliki Hatsiani, and I am a 7th grade student at Frost Middle School. Every day, teachers tell us to take out our laptops for another online activity. Laptops can be helpful, but they also make it really easy for students to get distracted and stop paying attention.

[00:59:37] I have seen students use their laptops to chat or call friends, play games, watch movies and TV shows, go on social media and search things that are not appropriate for school. Some students even go on websites where they can talk to strangers online.

[00:59:54] This is very concerning because it's unsafe, takes away from learning, and can make other students uncomfortable. Some people might say, aren't those websites blocked? The truth is, students keep finding ways around these blocks.

[01:00:11] Some students make Google sites or scripts to get to games and other blocked websites. Then, they share them with other people and sometimes even sell them. Every time something gets blocked, students find another way around it. Some people might also say that teachers should just monitor our screens more, but that is not a real solution because teachers cannot watch every single screen every second while also teaching the class.

[01:00:41] So what is the solution? I think FCPS should take a break from using laptops so much. We could use textbooks, paper assignments, or computer labs when we really need technology. This would help students stay focused and make school a better place to learn.

[01:00:58] Thank you. Manasi Long. Good evening.

[01:01:20] Earlier this month, Yusuf Ahmed, the co-founder of PlayLab, argued for FCPS to try a thoughtful, responsible experimentation with safeguards. As a physician scientist, I share Mr. Ahmed's love for the scientific process. In fact, over the past five to ten years, I've waited with bated breath to see the results of FCPS's experiments with one-to-one personal devices and Internet access in schools.

[01:01:43] Given that, I would urge the board to accept the results, step up, and set some boundaries on screen time and internet access in the classroom. As mammals, we learn through play and the slow process of work. Increased screen time means less playtime, less slow work, and less learning.

[01:02:00] This is evident in the recent downtrend in learning rates, rising incidence of ADHD, and increase in socio-emotional dysregulation among children and young adults. My daughter, this year alone in her third grade classroom, has seen over ten full-length animated films and over a dozen episodes of animated TV shows up until today.

[01:02:22] I'm an FCPS alum myself, and that's as much screen time as I've had in my entire elementary and middle school career combined. I propose that the board set some boundaries. We need to implement a data-driven, age-based screen time limit in classrooms immediately.

[01:02:41] No school system in the world that relies on a multilayered blacklist approach could possibly keep up with the natural childhood curiosity or the speed of the internet itself. Today it's a chatbot, tomorrow it's Five Nights with Epstein. Rather than discourage and vilify curiosity, I propose that the board create a publicly transparent age-based whitelist of approved sites so that children may curiously explore the educational material around them.

[01:03:09] generations have never had difficulty adopting to new technologies and quickly outpacing older ones I'm not concerned that our children will not be able to keep up I'm concerned that they won't be able to Kirsten Verklass thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to you today my name is

[01:03:48] Kirsten Verklass and I'd like to discuss two items the world language program update and the school calendar first on the word language program and in particular the immersion program I speak as the parent of a first grader in the german immersion program at orange hunt elementary school understand that the school board is continuing to debate how it will update the world language program including the emerging program i'm concerned that parents are not being consulted the recently announced change that high school students can no longer request transfers for world languages is a step in the wrong direction how are your plans to support

[01:04:23] language development beyond middle school with this change we also as parents have many ideas how we could make existing programs even better and we would like to be involved in the discussion and we would like to receive communication timely and transparently i would be happy to volunteer my time to be part of any working group or task force to update the world language program second on the school calendar the recent decision to have school on valentine's day does not address the issue. Fairfax County students have a very high number of four or three-day weeks leading to a disjointed calendar which impedes students learning and a

[01:05:00] hardship in particular for working parents. I welcome and appreciate the days of for various religious holidays that are off. I'm hoping that teacher work days can be consolidated for example the week of Thanksgiving or an additional week for spring break or fall break. These more consolidated weeks provide also more opportunity for camp coverage the rec center for example. Again thank you for allowing me to speak and I'd be happy to volunteer anytime as the parent to provide further feedback. Thank you. Gina

[01:05:38] Schleiman. Good evening my name is Gina Schleiman. Our three children are in the German immersion program in Orange Hunt Elementary. We have heard that the district is looking to overhaul the World Languages program and we encourage you to include current immersion parents in the development of these changes.

[01:06:05] These programs matter a lot to our communities and we have direct experience that is valid and helpful. Professionally, I'm an education strategic consultant. I specialize in new school development and school strategic improvement. Also, I'm the newly elected Orange Hunt PTA president.

[01:06:25] I have professionally interacted with five dual language immersion schools and three immersion schools personally with my own children. Research shows that dual language students generally exceed the performance of their monolingual peers by fourth grade. This is because immersion creates broader neural networks, essentially increasing our students' cognitive capabilities. Yes, students are successfully learning to read and write in two languages simultaneously, and kids in nearly all schools in Western Europe are learning in two languages from kindergarten nearly all the children nearly all our children's peers in

[01:07:05] Europe and Canada are fully fluent in two languages by the time they graduate and increasingly also have experience with a third or fourth language language immersion programs are important to prepare our children to compete for future jobs in international trade it is vital to keep to strengthen and to multiply these programs to ensure students are prepared for what America needs in the future. I ask that the board give attention and support to leverage resources and set clear expectations for immersion programs and to protect world language pathways through high

[01:07:42] school for all our immersion students. Thank you. Sarah Auerwald. Hello and good evening. As a current parent of two FCPS students, I'd like to speak in favor of the humble FLS program and hopes that you will consider expanding it alongside immersion language programming that you are now evaluating.

[01:08:18] It's not just that students who are an FLS program get some exposure that will help them with later language classes or to build cognitive skills, such as Gina just mentioned, or will help them in other subjects like math. It's not just that they will get cultural awareness. It's fundamental to the jobs of the future and the jobs of now.

[01:08:35] I want to briefly share my personal experience with you. When I was 12, I started learning Spanish once a week in a middle school language class in a public school system. I kept it up in high school. I decided to continue in college, and I just kept it up after that. Today, I use it every single day in my job, and that ability has given me a huge advantage over my monolingual colleagues.

[01:08:56] I'm the only one who can lead certain client meetings because of the language I speak. I know I'm not alone in our area. According to the D.C. Language Immersion Project, the most recent data I could find, the DMV is home to 1,000 global companies, 400 international organizations, 177 embassies, and, of course, the federal government.

[01:09:15] 67,000 jobs in DC alone are tied to international trade, like mine. In fact, demand for bilingual employees has doubled over the past decade and is growing faster than demand for jobs overall. Some people think that technology will displace this. I've heard that.

[01:09:30] We can put some AI agent in our ear that will help us translate automatically. It's true that tech tools have gotten better, and I use Google Translate all the time. time but ultimately no machine can displace the ability of a human to do business with another human in their language of choice as you consider what changes to make I would hate for some students to lack the skills which will help them get equal access to top international jobs in the region please consider expanding access to FLES program for all students within FCPS because they work and I also I say please keep parents involved in this

[01:10:04] process. Thank you. Shannon Romulus. Shannon Romulus. Adrienne Baer. Hi. I'm an engineer and a mom to four kids in the school district. As an engineer, I'm concerned with the excessive use of technology that has become the norm for this generation. As we prepare for advanced technology and AI, we need a workforce consisting of persistent problem solvers who are creative, adaptable, and able to challenge results. We also need soft skills, emotional intelligence, ethical decision makers, and people that can work in teams

[01:11:01] and motivate others. Study after study confirms that children who spend just a few hours a day on screens have decreased academic performance, shorter attention spans, and reduced connectiveness. These two are clearly not aligned and I'm also starting to see this decline in my own children. As a mom I have rules for time spent on electronic devices and what content is acceptable. School computers have no downtime and have provide limitless access to gaming sites and chat sites like discord. The healthy boundaries I established have gone by the wayside as this uncontrolled and reckless access is causing

[01:11:37] compulsive behavior, including constant missed assignments, lower test scores, sneaking devices, constantly switching tabs or desktops to make it appear as if homework's being done when it's really not. I learned this when my weekly Lightspeed report showed block attempt to access Discord, so I was pretty excited, until my home router showed me that hours upon hours that week had been spent on Discord, even though all of our personal electronics were locked away that week.

[01:12:04] I reached out to the school-based technology specialist who confirmed that students indeed have found a way to get around using proxy servers to bypass the light speed filter. What does this mean? Teachers can't stop them, parents can't stop them, IT can't stop them, so maybe you can stop them.

[01:12:26] I urge you to set limits on screen time usage by grade and block inappropriate content for the well-being of our children and for Colleen Jones.

[01:12:48] Good evening. My name is Colleen Jones, and I am the mother of a son with nonverbal autism. When my son was in first grade, he was issued an AAC device, a powerful tool on an iPad that gave him access to communication.

[01:13:04] But having access to technology is not the same as being taught how to use it. For years, my son had the device, but he received very little direct instruction in how to communicate with it during the school day. He was expected to somehow learn a new language system in scattered moments, while also navigating the demands of school, sensory needs, social expectations, and a world that often does not slow down for students who communicate differently.

[01:13:31] Technology is evolving rapidly, as we all know. AAC devices are more advanced than ever. They can give nonverbal students access to choices, academic participation, friendships, self-advocacy, and independence.

[01:13:46] For students like my son, communication technology was not optional. It was not supplemental. It was his voice. But technology alone is not enough. As smart as these devices are, they cannot replace the expertise, consistency, creativity, and motivation that a trained teacher or speech therapist provides.

[01:14:06] A child does not learn how to communicate simply because a device is placed in front of him. He learns because adults model language, create opportunities, respond to attempts, and believe that his communication matters. The current speech model is not enough for many AAC users.

[01:14:23] Two to three hours of speech support per month broken into 15-minute weekly increments is built on an outdated model of service delivery. It does not reflect what we now understand about neurodiverse learners, brain development, communication access, or the intensity of support required to build new communication pathways.

[01:14:42] Students learning AAC need meaningful embedded support across the school day. This includes the classroom, at lunch, on the playground, during specials, and with peers. They need teachers and staff. Tamara O'Neill.

[01:15:01] Good evening. My name is Tamara O'Neill. I'm a newly minted PTA president, volunteer, and Springfield district mom of two great kids.

[01:15:17] While I was heartened to hear that FCPS is forming a new technology review committee, I am here tonight to share my disappointment with the May 5th school board work session on artificial intelligence. At that meeting, the panel assembled to guide that discussion was blatantly and overwhelmingly corporate, and opportunistic in nature.

[01:15:33] The four invited panelists included representatives tied directly to the AI and education technology industry, whose aim is to sell educational products to schools, teachers, and students. Out of the four panelists, two were corporate, including the co-founder of PlayLab, who showed up to the meeting wearing an advertisement for his company on his hat, and the youth policy lead for OpenAI, a company being sued by multiple parents claiming it contributed to their children's suicides.

[01:15:59] It was missing actual experts, like independent child psychologists, classroom teachers, or researchers focused on mental health. This is not balanced policymaking. When corporations that profit from AI tools are centered in the conversation, the public is right to question whether students' well-being is truly the priority here.

[01:16:18] I'm here to remind members of the board that our children are not for sale. Some board members themselves expressed concerns during the session about the lack of diverse viewpoints on that panel. Yet others, including my own representative, celebrated the event on social media as a success without acknowledging the significant imbalance in perspectives presented to the public.

[01:16:36] If FCPS is serious about creating thoughtful AI and technology policy, then future discussions must include independent, non-biased experts who speak honestly about developmental risks. Parents deserve transparency, students deserve protection, and this board deserves access to balanced expertise before making decisions that will affect our children.

[01:16:57] Thank you. Andrew Salmon.

[01:17:15] Good evening to the board, Dr. Reed, and everyone here in support of our mission tonight. Regarding that mission, our educational mission has touched my entire life. I'm a product of the county K-12. K-12, I now teach in the county.

[01:17:31] I raise my kids here. I care about what we're doing. Whether we're teachers, operational staff, principals, superintendent, or the school board, it's important to remember we're just stewards for the schools and communities that we're taking care of. Our time is limited. Whether we get five years, 10 years, 30 years, or in the case of tonight, 40 years, it's our collective duty to make certain that we leave the school system in a better condition than when we got here. For over 20 years, hybrid telework has been an

important part of that mission's success, allowing staff to work a few hours a day or a couple days a week in order to

[01:18:10] best at home remotely or from an alternate location remotely to best maintain their mental health and their work-life balance. Countless projects throughout central office have been implemented and launched under that policy and despite the objections of numerous staff members and reams of evidence, data, and research, the policy was pushed forward regardless. I think it's fair to say after a year of this policy that we can track the data and it has harmed our mission. Cost to renovate buildings have exploded, staff don't feel nearly as heard, our morale is down,

[01:18:50] productivity has been negatively impacted employee retention and hiring has suffered and personally I'm I and my kids miss my wife we've lost hours a day days over the course of the past months we miss her this policy was not forward-thinking it is not innovative and it does not build us up we need a return to some form of the hybrid work model we need to take care of our staff

[01:19:16] thank you Diane Cooper Gould good evening I'm Diane Cooper Gould vice Vice President of Strategy at Fairfax County SEPTA, and I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of our organization.

[01:19:38] May is Speech-Language Hearing Month, and we are so happy that the proclamation was sponsored in celebration of our wonderful FCPS speech and language pathologists, assistants and audiologists, and others who are working tirelessly to support our FCPS students with communication disorders.

[01:19:56] Communication is critical to human development. It is the foundation of all relationships. Our ideas, culture, and innovation are formed, transferred, and evolved through communication. But when a given circumstance impedes our ability to communicate effectively, it can have a profound effect on our lives.

[01:20:13] Without remediation and support, we become isolated, frustrated, and unable to thrive. Most of us understand that speech is communication. And so think of speech pathologists as people who help other people to speak. But this is only a fraction of the job.

[01:20:29] importantly, they facilitate communication in all forms, whether that be through articulation, social pragmatics, or assistive communication. So SEPTA is happy to honor our SLPs, assistants, and audiologists. But we wouldn't be SEPTA without an ask. So for years, we have been receiving concerns from families of students using AAC devices to communicate. Many of these students are being granted minimal or even no SLP service hours at all. Despite being population with some of the highest communication needs in FCPS. Without appropriate modeling,

[01:21:05] interventions, and support, they continue to lag behind their peers. Over time, this results in diminished access to their education, friendships, and community at large. So please, hire more of these wonderful professionals and let them work their magic with our approximately 1,400 AAC students in FCPS. Thank you.

[01:21:29] Panos Hadziannis. Good evening, members of the school board. My name is Panos Hadziannis, and I'm a CPS parent with children in Frost Middle School and Woodson High School.

[01:21:47] First, I want to acknowledge that some schools, including my children's schools, are beginning to implement digital detox days and more intentional technology practices. I appreciate the principals and

educators recognizing that this issue deserves attention. I also appreciate that the CPS is beginning to address some concerns about technology in the classrooms, as well as more restrictive filtering approaches.

[01:22:10] However, I remain concerned that the conversation is focused on elementary school students. This is not just an elementary school issue. The harms continue to middle and high school, where the distractions become even more sophisticated. I have seen this first hand, especially with ADHD students.

[01:22:28] The constant presence of laptops, email, YouTube, music, games and other distractions creates an environment that is fundamentally harder for these students to navigate. These students are disproportionately affected because they are more vulnerable to attention fragmentation and this is not theoretical.

[01:22:45] Students routinely email each other during class as an off-task communication channel. I raised this issue directly with FCPS leadership and I was told these questions will be discussed by the ETRC. I was told student to student email has instructional value, but the everyday off-task use appears to far outweigh the educational benefit, if any.

[01:23:08] if any. If communication is truly instructional, it should flow through teacher-directed channels. Please, seriously consider restricting student-to-student email during class hours. This is a technically feasible change that would improve classroom focus.

[01:23:25] While I appreciate FCPS considering more restrictive and widely-style approaches to reduce harm, I still do not see convincing independent evidence that educational benefits of classroom technology outweigh the distraction, teacher policing burden, and other harm it introduces. Thank you. Please play the video testimony submitted by Debra Rohde.

[01:23:51] Hello, my name is Debra Rohde. I'm the PTA president at Mosaic Elementary. I appreciate your decision to defer technology refreshes to help meet the current budget. This deferment looked like a hopeful beginning to walking back the excessive access to tech in our schools.

[01:24:09] However, the innovation and technology policy that you have been moving forward with is disheartening and disastrous. You're pushing a policy that gives full freedom to FCPS to shove generative AI onto our kids beginning as early as kindergarten, and it begs the question of just how much lobbying you've been listening to from commercial tech corporations whose sole goal is securing their own financial advantage.

[01:24:33] You should feel shame for turning a deaf ear to your community while bending a knee to these corporations, all of whom are so acutely aware of the limitations and hazards of their own products, by the way, that their employees publicly admit to sending their own children to schools where technology is minimized, if not altogether absent.

[01:24:53] Reliance on Tech has documented detrimental effects on brain activity, learning, and the development of curiosity, and it forms addictive habits. You are all well-educated, and you know that there are no credible studies that point to the contrary.

[01:25:08] You are our civil servants and you owe us the responsibility of recognizing all of this and acting accordingly in our students' best interests. Prioritizing development of curiosity and joy for learning in all students is stated as FCPS's goal number one in our current strategic plan, a goal so at odds with the push

you are making in ungoverned AI policy and continued tech integration that it risks reading as contrived platitude. One or the other must give.

[01:25:39] Please listen to your constituents and the research. Prioritize your students, not the corporations lobbying for their financial advantage. Our children should not become the detritus of corporate experiment. Please play the video testimony submitted by Karin Mahoney.

[01:26:07] My name is Deborah. Good evening. My name is Karin Mahoney, and I am a parent to three children in Fairfax County Public Schools, two of which that are going to Ormchon Elementary and the German Immersion Program, and one eager, almost kindergartner who can't wait to join her big brothers.

[01:26:31] I am here today to talk to you about the World Languages Program. Specifically, I am urging that any upcoming overhaul of the programs be approached with transparency, community partnership, and a commitment to preserving language pathways all the way through high school.

[01:26:47] The German Immersion Program at Orange Hunt has been absolutely transformative for my two boys. Beyond learning to speak their German language, they've gained cultural awareness, cognitive flexibility, and a broader understanding of the world. These are skills that will serve them well in life.

[01:27:04] Our community is beautifully diverse and programs like the Immersion Program and FLES help our students connect across cultures, build empathy, and prepare for a global society. As FCPS considers changes to the world languages in FLES, I strongly believe that parent involvement must be a central part of the process.

[01:27:26] Families who children are directly impacted bring valuable insight into what is working, needs improvement and what outcomes matter most. Transparent communication and opportunities for meaningful feedback will help ensure that any redesign strengthen rather than diminishes the opportunities available to our students. I respectfully ask that you advocate for a thoughtful, data-informed approach to the world languages and FLES overhaul, a robust parent and community engagement throughout the process, preservation of immersion and FLSE programs as

[01:28:02] key components of a globally competitive education and a continuity of language instruction through high school so students can achieve true proficiency. Thank you all so much for your time and I look forward to working with you more on this. Please play the video testimony submitted by Amy Watring.

[01:28:31] Good evening. Hello my name is Amy Watring and I am an FCPS parent to a third and sixth grader. Over the last several years I have grown increasingly concerned about the amount of digital content my children and all FCPS children consume while at school and the amount of budget allocated to tech and AI. We have amazing teachers and administrators in FCPS and my comments are not meant to blame or shame anyone but the reliance on tech in the classroom is conditioning our kids

[01:29:07] to want ever more digital content. Research shows that digital content is addictive and we should not expect our children to exercise control and judgment about their own digital content consumption when many of us adults struggle with our own tech addictions in many fcps homes like mine we have rules related to screen time and tech use i commend the school board for their recent action passing a resolution which encouraged parents to delay giving smartphones to their children until high school however we need the school board to take direct action to place restrictions on

[01:29:45] daily and weekly screen time in schools guardrails on the use of ai and reallocation of budget dollars from tech to analog these are small changes the school board can make to reduce the use of tech in the classroom and the amount of digital content our kids consume in our elementary schools, children have the option to choose going on their computer during their free time. When given a choice, it's not surprising that children choose their computer with games and videos providing near constant stimulation and dopamine. We should be encouraging our youngest children to

[01:30:22] read physical books and play games with their friends, not log on to their computer and use gamified programs that do nothing to build their sustained attention stamina thank you chair anderson that was our last public speaker thank you madam clerk agenda item 6.01 student representative matters i call on miss mcconin good evening everyone i'm gonna keep this a little bit shorter because what i'm saying is not new and i've been sharing my thoughts on this matter with

[01:31:00] the board as a whole as well as individual members almost since the start of my term last july implementation of the new gradebook system should be paused for further review to ensure that it can work effectively and equitably across all schools in the division. A transition of this scale impacts teachers, students, counselors, and families daily, and one year preparation is not enough time to fully evaluate how the system will function in schools with differing schedules, course structures, staffing capacities, and technological resources. Before moving forward division-wide, FCPS should expand pilot testing, collect broader stakeholder feedback, and provide clear guidance and training

[01:31:37] to staff and families. Rushing implementation without adequate preparation or reason risks confusion and consistency and additional stress for both students and educators. We should go into a new gradebook with full confidence of its success across all schools and classes. This switch to skill-centered learning is not guaranteed equally effective across all schools and class types such as AP, IB, DE, honors, or regular classes. I will once again share the example I used back in February. If a student who has five skills in AP Bio takes the unit 7 test, does poorly on two of the skills, then moves on to unit 8, which is widely considered the easiest unit,

[01:32:14] a student is not going to go back and correct their content gaps in unit 7 because there is no need. This gradebook suggests that any gap in knowledge is skills-based. While this gradebook would work well in an English class where the same skills are being tested within each unit, let's say, writing skills and comprehension, I do not believe that this gradebook style would be universally effective across all FCPS high schools and classes, which is our main priority. And if we can't guarantee families, staff, and students that this change is indeed the best one and the last in a series of many gradebook changes, I don't see why we're being hasty. I recommend that the board pauses the implementation of the new gradebook to ensure its effectiveness across all schools and

[01:32:52] classes. Additionally, the division's AI policy for the upcoming school year should already be publicly available so students, teachers, and families have sufficient time to understand expectations and adapt to changes before the school year begins. We don't have a policy. Current draft proposals, including restrictions on school-provided generative AI tools for students age 12 or younger, requirements for AI literacy plans, and guidance regarding staff AI usage, are significant policy decisions that deserve transparency and community engagement prior to implementation. Families should know how AI tools are being used in classrooms, how student data and privacy will be protected, and what instructional standards will exist across

[01:33:31] schools. We should already have a comprehensive AI policy ready for viewing, but we only have drafts. Our community has had mounting concerns about AI usage and technology, and we can do more to address those concerns starting with a policy. We are starting conversations with AI companies before publishing a policy, which I believe is out of order. There should also be stronger language addressing the use of AI detection tools in classrooms. Many students have shared with me concerns that AI detectors incorrectly flag their authentic writing as AI generated, placing students in stressful situations where they feel pressured to prove their innocence.

[01:34:04] Some students describe downloading browser extensions or providing typing history evidence to their teachers simply to defend their own original work. Given the documented inaccuracies and inconsistencies of various AI softwares, FCPS should ensure that no student is disciplined or academically penalized based on that.

[01:34:25] Any AI-related academic integrity process should include clear due process protections, opportunities for student explanation, and consistent division-wide standards to prevent inequitable treatment between classrooms and schools. Thank you for your time.

[01:34:41] - Thank you, Ms. McConaughy. Agenda item 7.01, action item, certification of closed meeting compliance. Since the board has to return to its closed meeting later tonight, we will return to this item after we conclude that.

[01:34:57] session agenda item 7.02 confirmation of action taken in closed meeting I call on Dr. Anderson for a motion point of order I'm getting we didn't that we're going back to closed yes but we made several decisions that we are going to read into the record now just as we always do I move to excuse from attendance at school certain students identified in closed meeting pursuant

[01:35:37] to Virginia Code Section 22.1-254B1. Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Ms. Lady. All those in favor, that is Mr. Dunn, or I'm sorry, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Moon, and myself.

[01:36:19] Okay, we're going to do this again. Hold on. All those in favor, please. Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[01:36:43] All those opposed. All those abstaining. Mr. Frisch, Mr. Dannon. Thank you. With Mr. Dunn away from the dais. Will the clerk please read the vote?

[01:37:06] 9-0-2-1. The motion carries. Thank you. I call on Ms. Lady for a motion. I move to modify the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent regarding a school reassignment appeal of a student who possessed multiple THC vapes in a quantity consistent with distribution at school based on the discussion in the closed meeting.

[01:37:28] Is there a second? I second Ms. Marin. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Dunn.

[01:37:44] all those opposed Mr. Moon and myself all those abstaining Mr. Dannon the clerk please read the vote 9-2-1 the motion carries thank you madam chair I have a point of order with the previous vote I heard the clerk say the vote was 9-0-2-1 if we can get that clarified we cannot have four numbers the one is the not present no you said 9-0-2-1 the one was away from the table

[01:38:23] So nine nine yeses zero no's two abstentions and one not present got it. Thank you I call on miss st. John Cunning for a motion I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who participated in a group assault of another student At school and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the superintendent. Is there a second second? Thank you, mr Moon all those in favor mr. Frisch mr. McDaniel Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon,

[01:39:00] Dr. Anderson, and myself. All those opposed? Abstaining. Ms. Marin. I call on Mr. Frisch for a motion. I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who participated in a crime in the community and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent. Is there second. I second. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson. All those opposed,

[01:39:36] all those abstaining, Ms. Marin and myself. Will the clerk please read the vote? The vote for this one is 10-0-2. The motion carries. The vote for the last one, which we didn't announce, was 11-0-1, and that motion also carries.

[01:39:52] Thank you Madam Clerk. I appreciate you keeping me on track. I call on Miss St. John Cunning for a motion. I move to expel the student who committed a serious offense in violation of school board policy by engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment of another student on an FCPS bus both while the bus was in transit off school property and while it was parked or in motion on school property.

[01:40:17] Is there a second. Second. Thank you Mr. Dannon. All those in favor. Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[01:40:33] That is unanimous for all board members. Agenda item 7.03, action item, fiscal year 2027 approved budget. I call on Ms. Dixit for a motion. I make a motion that the school board adopt the FI 2027 approved budget as detailed in FI 2027 advertised budget modified by the adjustment adjustments included in the agenda items.

[01:41:03] Is there a second? Second. Thank you Mr. McDaniel. Ms. Dixit would you like to speak to your motion? Yes I would like to thank the superintendent Reed our budget staff our fellow my fellow board members and all the educators, families, students and community members who shared feedback throughout this budget process.

[01:41:22] I know how much time and effort goes into putting together a budget of this size, especially in a challenging financial environment, and I truly appreciate the collaboration and thoughtful work that went into these recommendations. Even with the revenue adjustments we had to make, I'm glad we will be we will still able to protect and continue a program that are so important to our students.

[01:41:43] I especially appreciate the funding for the maintain for middle school after school programs because these support really do make a difference for students both academically and socially. I also appreciate the effort made to look for operational efficiency and alternate funding sources before making a reduction that were that would directly impact classrooms.

[01:42:05] That approaches reflects our shared commitment to keeping students at the center of these decisions. Overall, I think this budget strike an important balance between fiscal responsibility and continuing to support the need of our students, staff, and schools.

[01:42:21] Thank you again for everyone who helped guide this process and shared their voices throughout the way. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Dixit. Mr. McDaniel, would you like to speak to your second? Yes. Here we are again. Another budget season in the books after this evening.

[01:42:38] It's my favorite time of the year. I also want to thank the superintendent, Lee, Matthew, and Alice for all their work on this. I think when we, at least in my mind, when I started this journey in January with all of us, which is the annual kickoff of the budget cycle, I had a lot of heartburn about where we would end up today.

[01:42:56] But we've ended up in a very good spot, and that's thanks in large part to the work of our staff, and the community, and of our funding partners, both here locally at the Board of Supervisors, and those that are still plugging away diligently in Richmond to deliver their budget by the end of June.

[01:43:12] This budget protected, as Ms. Dixit said, the middle school school programs, which we heard a lot about in the VIP camps. It protected the special education contract extension. It protected advanced academic resource teachers. And for the second year in a row, we fully funded the collective bargaining agreements across the entire division.

[01:43:27] That was a Herculean effort to get all of that accomplished under the significant financial strain and circumstances that we found ourselves. And as Ms. Dixit said, what all of these items have in common is that it protected the in-classroom experience of our kids, which is why we're here.

[01:43:45] It protected our teachers and our staff, our administrators, and the people that go to work every day to make this division the best division in the country, if not the world. So I will end with saying if anybody in Richmond would like pointers on how to adopt balanced budgets on time, they've got my phone number and they're free to give me a shout.

[01:44:05] but i'm confident that our state partners will come to a very good decision here in the coming weeks so thank you for your work again for staff and to the community watching at home thank you for all of the many emails and and showing up at town halls and giving us your input because that input is invaluable throughout this process thank you mr fresh thank you um you know so it's been said already that tonight is the you know when if this budget passes uh it'll be the the second year of the collective bargaining contract for our two first collective bargaining units it'll also be

[01:44:42] the first collectively bargained contract year for our principals supervisors etc and that is a big deal but I want to talk a little bit about the 28.9 million dollars I want to thank staff and the superintendent for ensuring that as we wait on our state partners to finish their work on the the budget. That the cuts that are required to do that are the least severe on our educators

[01:45:17] and our students as possible. But that's not to say that they do not have an impact. The other thing I would say is even if we do get enough money from our state partners to fill this hole, we are still scraping by to some extent in terms of our ability to think even bigger, to think even bolder dr. Reed and her team are doing a tremendous job to help close gaps to improve scores to continue our status as the leading school division in the Commonwealth with you know leading the Commonwealth on

[01:45:52] graduation rates and SOL passing rates and AP exam scores and passing taking and passing SAT scores every metric imaginable and we could be doing even more. So I hope as we move forward in the years ahead we can have conversations not only about meeting these needs but also about finding

ways to meet other needs in our school division whether it's closing gaps whether it's our maintenance backlog or other priorities. I'm confident we can

[01:46:26] get there with our funding partners. I'm confident that the new leadership in Richmond can make tremendous progress on the Jark recommendations that would net us another more than half a billion dollars in annual funding as a school division just to make us average with the rest of the country and I look forward to continuing that collaboration to get us there one day Dr. Anderson yes thank you just a couple of things to recognize first of all um the budget staff and Dr. Reed this is not easy work so your work is very much appreciated and Ms.

[01:47:02] Is she here? Oh, okay. Oh, okay. I'm looking over here. She's waving. Thank you for all of your many years of service as this is our last budget with you. You will be so sorely missed. And you are way too young to retire because you look like you're 35. But I digress. Thank you for your service. And we will miss you dearly. I know Ms. Burden will not know what to do come next year. But she'll figure it out. She always does.

[01:47:33] I I do want to highlight a couple of things in the budget that I'm very glad for because these are some of the things that were Important to our community which is the VIP camp that was one of the most spoken about issues in the Mason district and the fact that it's in this budget for us is a big win we do have some more work to do because we still have we've made some decisions here that were not really the decisions that we wanted to make, particularly given that last year there was a pause in the adoption of the social studies materials, and this year a reduction

[01:48:12] in the math materials, and we just heard it tonight, our kids are looking for a text. They're looking to move away from the screen, and so hopefully we'll have that be provided once the state budget comes in. However, I do want to ensure that as of late I've received, and I think some of you as well a number of communications from social workers and psychologists so I would like for Dr. Reed to provide some clarity because what I don't want to come to tomorrow morning is that oh you voted for the budget without addressing our issues so if you could offer what is the plan

[01:48:48] regarding the psychologists which were concerned about their positions being cut or eliminated and as well as social workers in terms of funding. Yeah thank you Dr. Anderson I think that First of all, there were no psychologist positions, no people that were not being funded.

[01:49:06] These were positions that were under discussion upon doing some research. They were positions that had not been filled that were under discussion for trades within the budget. However, after staff met regarding the social worker and psychologist positions, things are going to remain as is.

[01:49:28] It wasn't a budget decision as much as a communication and where the funding was coming from decision. So I have it on good authority from our staff that those issues have been resolved and the communication amongst departments rectified.

[01:49:43] And I believe that's already been addressed earlier today. Wonderful. Thank you. I'm sure that our school psychologists and social workers will be relieved to know that their concerns have not gone unheard. And, again, this is not as painful as it could have been.

[01:50:03] We, I think, have evidence of that because we did not have this auditorium filled during our public hearing. But it's certainly not where we want to be. And I'm looking forward to next year's being a little bit more smooth. Thank you. Ms. Lady.

[01:50:22] Thank you. Good evening, everyone. Tonight our board votes on a budget that reflects both our deepest values and some incredibly difficult realities. As many of you know, our fully funded needs-based budget faced a \$40 million gap.

[01:50:38] I'm extremely proud of our CFO, Lee Burden, and her team, Dr. Reed, and the leadership team for identifying ways we can save and figure out a path forward. Because the state budget has not yet passed, we are operating in a landscape of uncertainty. To present a balanced budget tonight, we have had to make some hard choices, choices that include deferring our micro-credentialing fund, reducing our staffing and math curriculum reserves, and scaling back the superintendent's strategic reserve.

[01:51:05] However, even in a lean year, we fought hard to protect vital community pillars, including the CBA, and securing the much needed funding for our middle school after school programs. When we talk about these reductions, we have to look at the bigger picture. Budgeting for public education is not an act of charity.

[01:51:22] It is our community's most vital economic engine. True, long-term economic development isn't just about attracting businesses in a narrow sense. It's about building a community where people genuinely want to live, work, and raise families.

[01:51:37] The number one determinant of a household's economic success is its level of education. Therefore, a thriving public school system is the literal foundation for a fiscally successful Fairfax County. If we want a robust economy, we must be serious about investing in the classrooms that produce our future workforce.

[01:51:58] This connection between funding and success was recently highlighted by the state's JLARC study, which clearly indicated that Virginia public schools require more significant investment. We are so incredibly grateful that our partners on the Board of Supervisors agree with the findings of this study.

[01:52:13] They understand the vision. Right now, there is a hopeful anticipation that the state will step up to bridge both our current gap and the broader funding gaps identified by JLARC. However, as we navigate this transition, we must ensure that future state increases are viewed as a way to build upon our local investments rather than replace them.

[01:52:32] Our goal moving forward must be a collaborative partnership where both local and state funding work hand-in-hand to fully honor those JLARC recommendations. We will pass a budget tonight because we must. But our advocacy for our students, our staff, and the economic future of Fairfax County does not stop here.

[01:52:50] Thank you. Ms. Marin, first off, I want to thank my colleagues for their statement of support after the unfortunate communication I received from the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. It meant a lot to me personally during what was a difficult moment.

[01:53:07] And I appreciate the Chairman's apology and conciliatory remarks. I think we can make progress towards one Fairfax. I envision an environment where we can passionately advocate for our positions openly in good faith with one another. We're all on the same team and I'm committed to doing my part. I say that because this is all connected.

[01:53:24] What happens in Richmond and in Fairfax County directly impacts what happens in our schools. We face painful cuts to high school crossing guards and student transportation this year. Our job

has life-changing impacts on our constituents. I appreciate the superintendent and her staff in developing this budget, which prioritizes the heart of education, small class sizes, and support for our students.

[01:53:45] We are rightfully restoring positions for special education and advanced academic instruction. I like that this budget finds \$5.2 million in savings by delaying digital device refreshes. It wasn't too long ago where we had fewer laptops in the classrooms, and I think this is a good place to rethink where we should invest our resources, as parent after parent tonight told us as well.

[01:54:07] There will be great challenges for our FCPS employees as the division moves forward with an 8.7 million dollar cut to the staffing reserve. I understand the tremendous personal hardship that comes with reassigning positions across Fairfax County. Without a more robust staffing reserve there's likely much less flexibility for accommodating our dedicated employees. I'll be paying close attention to the strains on our workforce over the next year and I trust that our board will be ready to articulate just how important it is to fully fund our schools.

[01:54:36] For the superintendent one area for improvement please for next year is the timeliness of budget questions being responded to. We are stewards of the public resources and we need to know how and why money is being spent. So we must do a better job of showing our work and I ask for more timeliness in answering these budget questions. For my colleagues on the school board and the board of supervisors I look forward to better days ahead. Mr. Moon. Thank you Madam Chair. I don't want to repeat what has been already stated

[01:55:10] by my colleagues. We know that, we all know that we need a budget. No matter what the situation is, we need a budget to get the school system going. So I'll be supporting the budget. But having said that, let me ask a couple of questions, starting with maybe even more difficult one first.

[01:55:32] Superintendent Dr. Reed, probably you may say it's anybody's guess, but when would you expect us to have next round of discussion related to additional funding from General Assembly.

[01:55:50] Well, thank you, Mr. Moon. My understanding is we're likely not going to get much news from the General Assembly until sometime in June, perhaps later in June. So before we actually, if Paul takes August recess, at least we'll have an opportunity to discuss that. Is that a fair assumption?

[01:56:10] I believe we should have more information before the recess, but this is an interesting experience. So that's what I believe will happen. I can't guarantee that, you know, Richmond will have a decision for us.

[01:56:26] I'm certainly hoping that. I'm certainly hoping that General Assembly will provide us additional education funding because there are many things that we have not been able to fund. You know, in fact, we had to make cuts.

[01:56:42] I mean, there were things that I was hoping that we could add rather than cut. So I'm hoping. I'm hoping that we'll have this conversation soon, sooner than later. With this, let me ask you a question about, I'm sorry that I have not given you a heads up, but I'm sure your budget stamp knows this easily.

[01:57:01] The percent of county revenue that's transferred to us compared to the last year, how is it for this time? Well, I know it's lower than last year, but I'm not sure. I know Ms. Burden likely has that data on the tip of her tongue.

[01:57:20] Yeah, it went down this year to 51.1. 51.1? What was it last year? 51.2. So .1. That's how much is .1?

[01:57:41] Is that about 40-some million dollars? We were going to say 30, give or take. Give or take 30. I was hoping that there would be about 40-some, But I'm glad to hear that it's not 40, but I still must, you know, inasmuch as board of supervisors is our partners, and we have to maintain a good working relationship, that doesn't always mean that we have to be always be praising what they have done and never point out, you know, some of the deficiencies from the elections.

[01:58:22] So, you know, having to have, you know, having to deal with, you know, \$44 million of, you know, budget gap, a funding gap, is something that I take it as painful. With that said, we always need budget.

[01:58:39] So I'll be supporting this. And when additional funding comes from General Assembly, I want to have a fresh round of discussion to address our students' needs. Mr. Dannen. Thank you.

[01:58:56] i just want to start by sharing a conversation that i had with a neighbor over the winter just before i was elected and he was in his 70s his wife and had lived in the home that they lived in for 30 years and they had raised several kids who graduated from fcps and you know when the topic of school's budget came up my presumption was that he would probably rather his tax dollars be spent on something that he might use or maybe reduced and i was shocked pleasantly when he said that every dollar possible should be going to our schools, that they are the heart of our community, they are the heart of our economy, and they're the foundation of our kids' futures.

[01:59:36] And, you know, as my colleague Miss Lady said, you know, our schools are our competitive advantage, economically speaking. My wife and I moved here because of these schools. It was almost automatic. Well, we've got to move to Fairfax County. They've got amazing schools. And that is still true, and that's one of the reasons I'm in this position tonight because I feel so strongly about that.

[01:59:55] You know, and that said, given the recent challenges, you know, I really appreciate the work that the superintendent and her team did to make adjustments, to stay within the available funds, especially that don't as directly impact the classroom experience. You know, this budget represents a lot of work, a lot of late nights, a lot of back and forth and consultation, and I know there's always ways we can improve, you know, and I remain hopeful that additional funds will become available when the state finalizes this budget, you know, and going forward, I'm looking forward to hearing the opportunities for improvement that come out of the Ballard Ridge Report, and seeing some of those changes incorporated in next year's budget.

[02:00:31] But again, grateful for all the work that you did, and I just want to point out that the dollars that we're talking about spending tonight are a commitment to our kids' futures and investment in our community, and I'm grateful for that. Thank you. Mr. Dunn. I wanted to ask Dr. Reed.

[02:00:48] There was a reduction in funding from the Board of Supervisors for crossing guards, and I appreciate my colleague for raising this issue, and it's being done at the high school level. So is FCPS doing anything to replace the lost crossing guards? No, sir, we're not.

[02:01:06] That's my understanding, and Mr. Lambert's not here this evening, but there is a certain crossing guard ability to actually direct traffic that is connected to a county function around law enforcement.

[02:01:22] So I know Mr. Lambert has been in contact with law enforcement, I can get you an update when he's back in town, his daughter's graduating out of town. But we don't have anything in the budget currently to address the crossing guards that have been cut from the county.

[02:01:41] I think that budget decision reflects a certain expectation that student injuries, student safety will not be threatened, student injuries will not increase. So I would just ask that FCPS, to the extent possible, start to gather that data, start to monitor that data, because if that assumption proves to not be true, and we need to revisit that in a conversation with the Board of Supervisors in the future.

[02:02:03] I also wanted to bring up the Baldrige Award. We've talked a little bit about the Gold Award and the unprecedented distinction that we've achieved, first time out. But for transparency for the public, I was wondering if you can talk about, as a practical matter, we talk about a trophy, but can you talk about some of the findings that were made and how, through the Baldrige process, we were able to save dollars or identify inefficiencies and be fiscally responsible through this exercise?

[02:02:35] So that's a great question, Mr. Dunn. And I think the ability for us to absolutely be laser-focused on strategically monitoring our resources is one of, I think, the largest benefits.

[02:02:51] It's maintaining alignment with position control documents at a time when the budget is so tight right now. And as I mentioned when I presented the budget, the reason we're able to have a budget adoption this evening with, honestly, the community feeling relatively comfortable with this compared to where we've been perhaps last year is all of the work we did throughout this year.

[02:03:19] As I indicated, before signatures were even dry on last year's budget, we were already making plans to make sure that we were strategically aligned in the deployment of staffing, that we had to unfortunately freeze positions at certain times and really engage in position control work to the degree we haven't had to do in a very long time in Fairfax County.

[02:03:44] And my thanks, of course, go out to all of our principals, our directors, our program managers who had to make tough decisions because it's one thing to enact an aligned policy and it's another to have to meet directly with staff and have really hard conversations about perhaps where someone was going to need to teach the next week or where an administrator was going to need to pick up an assignment the next week.

[02:04:10] And I also want to thank all of those staff who relocated and had to manage transitions within their professional and at times personal plans to accommodate the tight alignment we had to adhere to in a very disciplined manner this year to even be able to bring this budget to you this evening.

[02:04:32] that while it has some serious cuts to it, for sure, has not been as difficult, I think, as last year was. So the Baldrige framework provides us a framework for decision-making that keeps us organizationally focused.

[02:04:52] And I really thank Mr. Smith and the leadership team, Ms. Neal, Ms. Fowler, who worked so hard on that. And we will continue to work through that framework. The 19 examiners that visited that looked at that alignment and the position control and really enabling us to surface those things that once the year gets moving, right, that we can still manage and stay mission-focused on what's best for our students.

[02:05:26] That's great. I mean, I appreciate the budget discipline. It would be, I think, helpful just for the public to be able to understand, And if you don't have it available now, just in a future publication, some examples, some kind of anecdotal examples of cost savings that were achieved, efficiencies that were achieved, just so there can be some sense of you've done a great job describing at a high level, but kind of at a concrete level so the individual can understand.

[02:05:52] Yes, sir. And I think we had one slide, Mr. Dunn, that had over \$200 million that we've actually carved out of the budget in the last two years, which is a significant budget carve-out for us in terms of our, for sure, as it connects to our transfer.

[02:06:10] And I did have just one moment, Mr. Dunn, if I could, Ms. Burden wants to correct her response on the transfer percentages, if we can be indulged for just a moment. miss burden yeah wait a second Matthew's stopping me he's calculating quickly but I can tell you that it was it's 51.1 in fiscal 27 the budget that's under your consideration it was 50 point 51.4 in the current year fiscal 26 and each one

[02:06:49] percent is valued at about 20 each point one percent is valued at about 25 million, so the difference is \$75 million. Okay, thank you. I wanted to follow up. The \$200 million you mentioned last year, year before, you had mentioned the \$100 million, and there's a web page put up, and I had gone through trying to do the math, and I couldn't. It didn't quite add up to \$100 million, so I'll look forward to going back and looking at that slide for \$200 million,

[02:07:24] but I just want to make sure if we put out a figure, people can see the math and add things up so it actually equals that amount. In terms of class sizes, last year we increased class sizes and I know this budget proposes to undo that to some extent, but has there been any after-the-fact analysis of the impact at the elementary school level or any conversations because just anecdotally the conversations I've had with principals, especially at the elementary school level, is the impacts have been quite severe when combined with the elimination of classroom monitors.

[02:07:59] So the funding, of course, for classroom monitors, that funding was related to COVID relief funding, which doesn't exist any longer. The class size escalation, I think, at elementary in particular, but honestly, it was elementary, middle, and high school, certainly is not instructionally moving in the direction we would hope.

[02:08:23] But we also recognize that classes are irregularly sized. But we're going to obviously be looking at our SOL data very shortly to determine what type of impact potentially class sizes might have had on student achievement outcomes.

[02:08:41] So I think more to come on that topic, Mr. Dunn. That's great. And I do want to just echo my colleague's comments that it's wonderful that after many years of working towards having all of our employees have an equal voice to the collective bargaining process, that we've now achieved that.

[02:08:58] And I think that's something definitely to celebrate so that we can not be a top-down system, but be a partnership because truly it does take a village to provide a world-class education for every child. Thank you. Ms. Angel Cunning.

[02:09:15] So first of all, I'd like to thank the budget team for their hard work and actually really presenting the best budget possible in light of the shortfalls we're facing. You guys make it look easy, and I know it wasn't easy. So that makes it easy for us, even though it was not for you.

[02:09:32] I'm not going to repeat a lot of what was said tonight because my colleagues did a great job of repeating everything. I just want to remind our community that our success and the success of our schools is really based on our staff, on our teachers, people that are working with their kids, with our kids and with our children.

[02:09:53] It really is our legacy to the community and to the country. We stand out because of that. The work that has been done and what this budget represents is that schools are not a cost. They're an investment in our children.

[02:10:09] That educators are not a line item. They are repositories of knowledge and community builders. And that students are not a statistics. They are the promise of a strong future for our community. And that education is not an option.

[02:10:25] It is the cornerstone of our democracy and the reason we show up. Vote, budget, and fight. This budget scaled back as it is represents our effort to keep that promise of education alive and what it represents to our entire community.

[02:10:45] And I really do commend our staff and our superintendent for their very careful and thoughtful work that went into making very difficult decisions and creating this budget. So thank you for everything you've done and thank you to all the people that are working that are down in the trenches, making the magic happen for our children.

[02:11:07] - Thank you, I'm gonna take a quick turn. I heard something recently that was fascinating to me, that if we took from the day the Declaration of Independence was signed and you got \$10,000 every day since then, you wouldn't have a billion dollars.

[02:11:24] Like, it's just not enough time. And I constantly am trying to adjust my thinking when I think about just how much money our budget is, because that's one of those things that when the numbers get so large sometimes you don't pay attention to what they mean and I never want to be in that circumstance which is why I 100% know why it's significant that the county increase didn't increase as significantly as we needed for sure our staff has and Dr. Reed has done an amazing job of ensuring

[02:11:56] that we had a path forward that isn't perfect but it's a path forward and again it is indicative of the fact that the community um is is with us at this moment in terms of of how we're we're making the path but the state aid for fairfax county public schools is 860.8 million dollars in this budget and the county transfer is 2.8 billion dollars of our 4.1 billion dollar budget and so

[02:12:30] i just want us to keep in mind that i and i tell people this all the time i always feel like oliver twist that we're standing out please sir can i have some more because it constantly feels like that is that we we have no ability to raise money on our own so i we oftentimes are looking to other people and it's it's a hard position to be in every year so i'm extremely grateful that we're where we are um but i have advocated strongly we need textbooks it's one of the reasons that i love what's happening with lexia is that we're watching kiddos write um we need those social studies

[02:13:07] textbooks these are not optional things that were their decisions and so we are having to make hard decisions and I am looking forward for the state to come in and pick up their share so I I am applauding our staff and what we've done this year and I'm grateful that we have such a clear path forward and I'm really hoping that it's a happy ending at the end of this year so seeing no others mr. Dunn did you

want to go back okay thank you seeing no others we're gonna to go ahead and take a vote for the motion that is on the screen. All those

[02:13:44] in favor Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Miss Marin, Mr. McElveen, Miss St. John Cunning, Miss Lady, Miss Dixit, Mr. Dannen, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson and myself that is unanimous for all board members. Congratulations guys. Agenda item 8.01 academic matters. Point of order we have a follow-on. I am so sorry I made a

[02:14:22] mistake too fast I call on mr. McDaniel for a follow-on thank you I moved the direct superintendent to develop a document outlining sound financial management principles policies and practices for board discussion and consideration and a budget committee meeting of the whole to take place by September of 2026 is there a second I second thank you dr. Anderson mr. McDaniel would you like to speak to your follow-on sure quick quick history lesson in 1975 the board of supervisors adopted a document that became known as the ten principles of sound financial management and they may not have known at the time but that

[02:14:58] document became the bedrock for the way the board continues to manage the budget today and it also laid the foundation and paved the pathway for the county attaining the ever coveted triple a bond rating which for those watching at home is a perfect credit score for governments across the country and that rating has saved the taxpayers over a billion dollars i think what this motion does is two things number one it asks staff to come back to us with the recommendation on a similar document incorporating all of our policies and procedures and regulations and it sets that conversation up for a full budget committee of the whole meeting to take place by

[02:15:34] september of 2026 and as i would note that this would something adopting something like this would bring us in alignment with with the county board of supervisors their 10 management principles i think it shows taxpayers that were committed to being responsible stewards of public resources for education it's been stated the size of the budget um this evening and a document like this and i use the word document loosely because it could be a resolution it could be a policy there there's a bunch of different ways to kind of go about making this this come to fruition but it's a message to the public i think it's a message to the taxpayers i think it's a message to our

[02:16:09] funding partners and our staff and it it shows a clear principle framework of what's going to guide for hopefully years and decades to come the financial management of this school division the motion doesn't adopt anything tonight this is not a final policy decision it sets up a conversation and i think especially as we've coming out of the baldridge process there's opportunity to perhaps ingrain some of those findings into the long-term fiscal management of the division so i'm looking forward to the conversation tonight and hopefully in september dr anderson would you like to speak to your second yes briefly i'm happy to support this

[02:16:45] because I believe it answers many questions that I've had since I've been on the board and others as well. When we talk about budget transparency, when we talk about ensuring that our community understands how our budget is built, I believe having such a document can support that.

[02:17:03] Every single year since I've been on the board, it's been, tell me how you got to the budget that you've arrived to. And then the conversation regarding how the conversation occurs with each of the departments. If we can embed all of those practices into a very clear document, it will remove some of the questions that show up year in and year out. And this is not an ask to go change anything. This is an ask to

bring back some information so that we can have a fulsome discussion to increase transparency to our public. So I'm happy to support it because I think it will

[02:17:39] serve us, particularly if this results in the mirroring of some of the practices that the Board of Supervisors currently have, starting with the summary document, which this year Dr. Reed produced, which I've been asking for for months.

[02:17:57] And when we had that document at the work session, I was very pleased to see that we are being intentional and we have some details for the community, not just the words that we all speak in these meetings, but something tangible. that um folks who are interested can go and find and and engage with so i see this just taking that to scale so we have greater clarity in terms of how we arrive to the numbers that we are that

[02:18:24] that are um reflected in our budget um so thank you mr um mcdaniel yeah there was i almost said um for bringing this forward and i'm glad to support it because i think it will be a great opportunity for us to to be clear about the process mr moon okay thank you thank you mother just uh you know thank you mr mcdonald for reaching out to me the other day and wanting

[02:19:00] to have a chat about this uh sorry that we couldn't we have not really had that opportunity it was too hot that day my question to you is we have we have el5 which we generally discuss in October timeframe and of course we can always change the time you know when we discuss these individual years you know EL5 is a financial planning it's pretty lengthy documents but it starts with the superintention law failed to develop an

[02:19:35] annual budget and it has probably about a dozen items below and provide the board with a multi-year plan has another six seven and provide timely advice to the board allowing the board adequate time to consider information the information presented up and three other things and there is one more number four take all reasonable for the anticipatory and proactive actions in securing financial resources of the division and in the preamble at the top introductory paragraph it also says in preparing the division budget the superintendent shall not fail

[02:20:14] to utilize best practices for budgetary planning and financial reporting so superintendent has been doing this for a number of years and I am trying to see how what we are trying to accomplish from this motion is going to be different from what we will be discussing through this year EL5 that's where my question lied and wanted to have that conversation with you. Mr. McDaniel. I assume the time is yielded did the time is yielded to me the answer absolutely okay and I

[02:20:53] remember the day we couldn't talk as it was a hundred something degrees outside and everybody was kind of staying in the air conditioning but yeah I think that's a good point I mean you know for example when I talk about you know I don't know that tends the magic number maybe it's eight maybe it's twelve maybe it's ten but you know something like EL5 and I actually asked staff in addition to EL5 there are 106 financial regulations and policies across the division that a lot and EL5 is another piece of that kind of that puzzle so you know some a way that I could potentially foresee EL5 which is how the board holds the superintendent accountable for budget is you know maybe one of the principles is

[02:21:33] how the superintendent is held accountable and if there's a reference to EL5 and that's so that the public can understand that the superintendent within the framework of an executive limitation is told to go forth and do great things with the budget so that's one example of how we could incorporate EL5 and

then my hope is that as staff is doing some homework on this in the coming weeks or the coming months rather those other 106 policies and regulations can be boiled down into kind of a very simple public-facing you know easily digestible document another example I hear all the time in the community you not all the time but sometimes you guys don't audit that

[02:22:11] budget that's not true so I'm hoping that maybe one of the principles is regular routine budget audits where there's a reference to how often the budgets are audited. Sorry to take up the time. Thank you. Ms. Marin. Mr. Moon I can put you on a go back. I appreciate the willingness of my colleague to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. While I share the sentiments of fiscal prudence I will not be supporting this motion. This work is too important to delegate to the superintendent and there isn't clarity on why it's required. It was just mentioned we have something like a hundred policies or regulations. Well

[02:22:48] before we implement more frameworks, we must hold the superintendent accountable to what's already in place. What my colleague also just mentioned about our executive limitations, again, I see a redundancy that I'm not sure why we would go ahead and start a new set of principles. From what I understand of the county's 10 principles of sound fiscal management, there are not regular reports on how the county's work meets those principles I did delve pretty deeply into the county's tense principles of sound fiscal management when I was on the Joint Committee for Facility Savings earlier this year and I looked

[02:23:27] back for years and could not find any reporting so I'm not willing to ask the superintendent to spend her limited staff time and resources looking into a new review review category when we have executive limitations we have policies and we have a budget process I think the work to explore how the 10 principles of sound management could work that's a great task for the budget committee that's exactly the kind of work that the budget committee could be doing I would be happy to consider ideas for updates to our policy our governance manual we can develop a robust framework that reflects the intent of the school

[02:24:05] board as well as the accountability measures for the superintendent Mr. Moon for a go back Yes, I was deep in thought about how the superintendent would bring back to us, whether she's going to just assemble our existing practices and policies and principles and just accumulate in one document and share with us.

[02:24:38] And for board discussion, is that what the mover of the motion is envisioning to happening or ask a superintendent to somehow come up with a completely different set of principles and best practices and et cetera?

[02:24:57] So if that's not the sense I'm seeing a Mr. McDaniel shake his head, that's not the case, then I would, I am supporting the motion. I just want to make it clear to the public what you are doing. I mean, I would consider that as sort of advanced discussion of this EL5 because we want to start the budget conversation sooner than later.

[02:25:20] Because we always, as soon as we adopt the budget, even though we don't have the number, money from General Assembly yet, and once we go through that, we need to start right away for the following years. So, with that, I will welcome the opportunity to have all your discussion, but I will consider the more of this year five discussion, then brand new discussion to be followed by year five discussion a month later.

[02:25:51] Gotcha. Thank you. Mr. Dunn, I missed him on the first time, so this is his first time around. I appreciate the intent behind the motion. I'm just not sure what it achieves, and it seems at odds with years now of studious praise of Ms. Burden in her office, and I think that's well deserved. I believe Ms. Burden has won awards for the excellence of her work. I have no doubt that we're already implementing sound financial management. If we weren't, then I would be seriously concerned.

[02:26:27] I believe Dr. Reed, as many of us have said, is the best superintendent we've perhaps had in the history of FCPS so any doubts as to the financial rigor, especially after winning the gold award for the Baldrige process, it just seems there's a dissonance here I can't quite fathom. I do appreciate the bond rating. We have nothing to do with the bond rating.

[02:26:52] We don't have taxing authority. We don't really do anything in that regard. And I do believe we have established tools and when there have been previous motions to do things like this establish things outside of the regular process of policymaking and such it's been rejected by a majority of the school board saying like let's use established processes so I think just for the sake of consistency I'd like to support the idea that we should be fiscally responsible we should be the epitome of good government and I think all my advocacy for the past two and a half years is consistent with that but I also

[02:27:32] believe we shouldn't just do feel-good measures that as my colleague pointed out aren't even reported on if we're going to do a feel-good measure let's have annual reports let's have updates similar to we have academic matters and different superintendent reports every week let's get weekly reports or bi-weekly reports or monthly reports but just to put principles out there and not live up to them. It's like so many companies that say, these are our values, and then how do they exemplify them? There's no reporting. It's just words on the wall. So I have a bias towards action

[02:28:09] and a bias towards outcomes. I don't think this gets us to either. Dr. Anderson, for a go back. Thank you. I appreciate the conversation regarding the ELs, and the way that I view this is that the ELs are the board's expectation in terms of what the superintendent is going to produce.

[02:28:29] Could there be some overlap? Certainly. But what I'm hoping that this would accomplish is to get staff to show the strategies they are employing when they are developing a budget. Like what are the things that they're thinking about when they come up with what could be considered random numbers on a sheet of paper?

[02:28:52] I want to see that homework. I want to better understand how do you arrive to the proposals that we then adopt as a board as our advertised budget. I see this as kind of opening up the curtain a little bit to the work itself, not just to the product, which is what I believe is reflected in the ELs. It's the process that staff employs. That's the piece that I'm hoping achieved by this work at least that's my understanding so that is why I'm in support of this because it will offer greater transparency in terms of how

[02:29:31] they have achieved what they put before us and not just that they have met the guardrails of what we have asked in the EL miss Marin for go back you know I I'm not again the ten principles that the county uses I'm not sure that the board has even received them you know they weren't linked in the email so again I know I looked into them deeply a few months ago I've been asking for quite some time for the board to have regular on the on our work session agendas

[02:30:06] regular time to talk about finances to even rephrase what we do as budget to finance and financial management I think just adding one more system for the superintendent to report through does

not make us more robust in our approach you know we could have a more robust working budget committee I'd rather the board spend its time discussing how we want to approach budgeting and really identify what information we need rather than ask the superintendent to deliver one more thing in addition to EL reports in addition to the budget planning in

[02:30:43] in addition to strategic plan reports, quarterly budget reports, I think that we could take the time and figure out what we want to do over the next year and say, when are we going to talk about our financial assets and management? How can we even tie this to ELs?

[02:30:59] We've talked about the executive limitations being the time in which we add things like this so it's not just floating off, not related to something. And I think we've developed a not very good habit of just kind of putting things out there, attached to things I've done it myself too because I feel like it's kind of the only way to get things done at times but that's a symptom of a problem and not the way that we should be doing our public business it should be more organized so I think that we could wait on this and have discussions ourselves and do our own homework before kicking it over to the superintendent to spend

[02:31:33] her time doing it Mr. Dunn did you need to go back okay seeing no others we're gonna go ahead and take a vote for the follow-on motion that it's on the screen All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[02:31:59] All those opposed, Ms. Marin, Mr. Dunn. Will the clerk please read the vote? 10-2, the motion carries. Thank you. Now we're ready for agenda item 8.01, academic matters.

[02:32:26] All right Madam Chair and members of the board and public this is exciting this evening to be able to talk about literacy and I've actually been in a number of classrooms recently language arts classrooms at middle school in particular in elementary and just really excited about the amount of reading and writing that's going on recently I was at Thoreau middle school and visiting some language arts classes and looking at the literacy work that's happening at

[02:33:06] Thoreau and our Eagles have been working very hard I've actually procured one of our middle school I believe it's our seventh grade seventh graders were reading a book that we may make a community read here shortly so in the depth of questioning and interaction with text I was really really pleased with so this evening it's my pleasure to talk about the secondary literacy work that's going on we've spent a lot of time talking about our third grade reading goals and not as much time talking about what staff are doing at

[02:33:40] secondary so as part of our equitable literacy work our equitable access to literacy work schools have been implementing several important changes this year to both the core literacy and the intervention and this slide really captures both buckets of that work in the core we're really working to build staff knowledge of what we would characterize as evidence-based literacy instruction which supports the implementation of the revised SOLs for English language arts and using data to really work to guide instruction on the

[02:34:19] intervention side we're using diagnostic assessment data to develop individualized reading plans for students who need additional support and this has been particularly valuable coming from elementary to middle school and in those six seven eight grades at several schools and seven eight at our remaining middle schools so the real hope is to have earlier identification of concerns better alignment of

support and really stronger progress monitoring for students who need help I think that one of the things that's been really challenging is meeting with families because as we began our early literacy

[02:34:57] work with phonics for example in direct explicit instruction at kindergarten first second third in our elementary grades there's been I think some you know sincere concern about what about students who didn't have that direct explicit instruction in the early grades and so it's really been incumbent on us to look for strategies to better support our students at secondary so let's take a look at how these changes come together to better serve our students literacy needs at secondary and if you wouldn't mind please playing the

[02:35:32] video thank you there have been a lot of changes in the Virginia SOL which have increased rigor for our students and what's been really exciting to see is that they're able to meet that rigor. So we don't necessarily want you to tell me what you read in the text. We want to discuss it and go into those deeper comprehension strategies to better understand what we're reading and how we can apply it beyond the classroom. It's also getting a lot more at those higher level thinking skills, critical thinking. So instead of having students summarize a text, which we do first, but then we want to take it that next step further and understand

[02:36:09] how is the author doing this? How do we apply this to other stories? And what is my own opinion of that? How might this impact my life? And we're doing this with a lot more complex texts as well. The texts that the students are interacting with on a daily basis in our class is much higher level than they're used to seeing because of this shift. And it's been exciting to see that they actually can do it, right? A lot of them come into the air and they're like, oh my gosh, this is a really hard class. Like I can't do this. And already by the end of quarter one, they're like, oh, like I'm a good reader like I can do this but it's because we've been pushing them in this new curriculum pushes them to actually try to do hard things if you walk into

[02:36:47] our classroom you're going to see kids doing their writing they're reading they're talking this curriculum really lets us do all of those in the classroom every day you're not gonna see us at the front lecturing you're gonna see us working with small groups of students and in order to make those small groups work we have to have more onus on the students doing independent work and And so that means with these really complex texts, we are providing more tier one scaffolds across the board so that students can access these complex texts on their own while we are working with students who either need more support or who need a challenge.

[02:37:23] These things being linked together helps so much because it takes so much time to plan to teach this way, right? Like if you're not really, we're not really teaching one lesson every day, we're teaching four or five. and the amount of outside time that is required to plan for that is not feasible so the fact that the county already lays out and says hey you're teaching this strategy for group one you can do this for group two you can do this that's already all made for me like all i have to do is open it up and like digest it and know what i'm going to teach and be ready to go so tier two

[02:37:58] instruction would be a very short intervention that happens a couple of times a week so for For example, I pull many of our multilingual students for 30 minutes at a time. We've been able to identify our students by first using at the iReady screener, which has been brought up to the middle school level.

[02:38:17] We also have the VALS testing that was designed by Virginia Department of Education, and what I like about the VALS test is that it really breaks down for the teacher the areas of strength and the

areas of need for our students, and it really is the most in-depth testing that we have had at the middle school level that really gets to a student's decoding abilities, their fluency abilities, their orthographic abilities.

[02:38:43] It really does highlight a student's areas of strength but also their areas of need and that's where we provide the intervention. Sometimes the students that we have need more support than what we can offer in Tier 2. So we call that Tier 3 instruction and these are for our students who tend to be at least two years below grade level.

[02:39:01] And so this gives me an opportunity to really work in small groups, maybe two, three students at a time. It's been so impactful to have these types of interventions because we are able to get to more students in a short amount of time.

[02:39:16] And we're really providing them science-based, Orton-Gillingham-based interventions, which is the best for all students, whether they're in special education or general education, because all students are general education students first. approach to intervention either tier two and tier three has grown dramatically in the last five years. I really enjoy my job. I feel like I make a difference in students lives. I feel like the materials that I am provided with really let me be the reading specialist that I was trained to be

[02:39:53] prior to five years ago. I'm so excited to see that my students have grown in their oral communication skills. I see a significant increase in their writing skills. My goal is to give them everything they need so that they can find the joy in reading like I find the joy in reading.

[02:40:10] Our students because of this curriculum over the past two years have become so much more resilient. Like I can't, so much more resilient. That is not hyperbole. The skills we use in the classroom, I tell the students have way less to do with English and more to do with the people that they're working on becoming and so they're learning those communication skills those social skills those self-management skills that we need as adults and we're still practicing as adults so that's really what it's about you know it's hard to watch that and not just be

[02:40:47] inspired our educators are amazing they're working so very hard and i i think i really want to thank our board for having the vision to make sure that we put the right tools in the hands of of our educators because once our educators have the tools they need they make magic and our young people are the beneficiaries so I couldn't be proud of our prouder of our educators and I hope that this example from Robinson secondary go Rams helps bring this work to life I know the reading specialists across the school division at the secondary schools are just they're so

[02:41:27] proud of the work they're doing and I am proud of that as well and I know our our team is I also want to share that while I visited Thoreau middle school recently the amount of close reading and writing that's happening in our social studies classrooms is also significant and so I just want I think there are staff across multiple content areas that continue to work really hard to deepen the understanding and deepen the work that's happening across our division so let's take a look at some of the results that we're seeing in our secondary reading and when I think about this is the growing green and these are not our

[02:42:06] jet goals these are our get to green goals but this is rather students improving their academic achievement which is meaning we're getting more students on grade level specifically for reading some of the greatest gains have been at the middle school level which makes sense because students are benefiting

from more time with programmatic changes that began in the elementary grades so when I look at this data I mean we are so proud of what our staff are doing and when you're out in schools to see the amount of writing

[02:42:40] that's occurring to see the excitement in our students as they become readers it's really exciting I think the as the years roll forward we're going to see that flywheel catch for more and more of our children and the data is just going to continue trending up the stronger core instruction I really appreciated what the reading specialist was talking about that all students are general ed first general education first which means every child needs to have instruction at grade level and the data once we are shoring up our

[02:43:17] core instruction this will enable more students to begin the year ready to access grade level programming and grade level learning. So let's look at the shrinking red because with the growing green we have a shrinking red which growing green I think the green I'm thinking Boston Red Sox but that's maybe I shouldn't say that no okay all right all right but the shrinking red this is meaning that similarly as more students are getting into the green at grade level the efforts at providing intervention and the reading plans are having a significant impact in if you will

[02:43:55] shrinking the red or moving students out of the risk category and in some cases by double digits so comparing results from last winter to this winter we see that fewer students in every secondary grade level are demonstrating risk over a year ago if we look diagonally across the columns and rows in the chart and you can see those you see that impressive risk reduction in each cohort because these are the same students then year over year so the largest improvement was in last year's eighth grade cohort more than half of the students demonstrating risk last winter are no longer

[02:44:34] demonstrating risk in ninth grade board you have to be proud of that the amount of work that's happening across our language arts curriculum and our commitment to equitable access to literacy is showing results and I couldn't be prouder of our students our educators and the family supporting our students at home so let's take a look for a moment at our high school data highlights our high school data also gives us reason for celebration this year 12.8 percent fewer seniors who took the growth assessment performed below

[02:45:09] expectations again double-digit growth as a reminder only seniors who didn't pass their prior year SOL are required to take this assessment so the number of students in this particular data set is relatively small but these are students who already had experienced a lack of success and are showing double-digit improvement in addition 26% of high school students who demonstrated risk in the fall achieved more than a hundred percent of expected yearly growth in just one semester. That's a statement to sit with for a minute. That's the result of hard, intentional, focused work. Finally, our inclusion efforts are yielding

[02:45:48] success as well with a 100% pass rate for students with disabilities in the 10th grade AP seminar course. That, folks, is a huge win in I can't even tell you how many ways. These data points are strong signals that access, support, and high expectations actually result in moving student outcomes and as we think about hitting that 2030 goal the celebrations we're going to be able to see in 2030 are delivering on the power and promise of public education this

[02:46:23] school division is strong and getting stronger as we look ahead our strategies for continued secondary literacy improvement is on deepening and sustaining this work one of the things that's critical

and Mr. Dunn I really appreciate you asking about the Baldrige work is we must stay disciplined with best practice I think that as I look around the country at times we try one thing one year and the next year we try a different thing in the fall what we need to do is stay with research best practices stay disciplined and it's not glitzy to do that but it matters to our kids and the success of our school

[02:47:01] division so our ability to deepen our work and stay relentlessly focused and disciplined on our work is going to be the key to our students success in core instruction it means continuing to build our educator capacity to scaffold complex grade-level texts that are aligned to the state of so else operationalizing our for the first time our English language development basal resources and strengthening explicit vocabulary instruction with high quality materials.

[02:47:34] In our intervention areas, it means continued guidance and professional learning for our staff. And honestly, when you listen to our staff, even in this video, the excitement they have is contagious, honestly, across the division. Our learning and working with our multilingual learners, our students with disabilities and And the stronger use of that English language development block, with targeted literacy support, will continue to increase outcomes.

[02:48:04] We are seeing promising momentum, and now the work, obviously, is scaling it and making it consistent. Overall, we're encouraged by the progress, but we're not done yet. We're headed in the right direction, and as we gain momentum, that flywheel will catch and we'll continue to see stronger outcomes.

[02:48:23] I also want to thank our principals our central office staff who are relentless in their support our region offices our school support staff chief of schools. It's a team effort and when everybody gets aligned and we focus and stay disciplined we can move mountains so that tonight madam chair is academic matters.

[02:48:47] Thank you Dr. Reed Mr. Frisch is going to kick us off. Yes thank you and thank you to staff do we have anybody here from the team. I think they're all home reading they've worked so hard I hope they're getting some rest you know in June of 2021 now Senator Pekarski and I brought forward a forum topic to bring in experts from UVA in structured literacy and the science of reading to talk about what instructional services is already beginning and how our board could support the work to

[02:49:26] transition the entire way we consider uh this important uh work for our students and that was almost a year before the general assembly tackled literacy with the virginia literacy act which i think miss marin did some advocacy work on and it's heartening to see that the rollout that began primarily with our youngest learners that we are seeing impacts with right throughout that process We had lots of questions about when are we going to start hearing about what's happening with our older learners who didn't have the benefit of structured literacy when they were in our earliest years, K-3.

[02:50:07] It's great to see that the work that's being done, the value of the evidence-based approach, even if the students did not get that when they first began in Fairfax County Public Schools, and I'm not saying that none of them did, because some of them certainly did, that it's having, by these numbers, a profound impact.

[02:50:26] And so I'll be grateful to see maybe some of this data disaggregated just so that we can see where that impact is being felt the most. But also, you know, as we see our learners who begin their time in FCPS with our approach to structured literacy and the science of reading, how that impacts their

trajectory through our system and whether these needs for remediation later in our school system are less needed, less severe because students began with something from the start.

[02:50:58] Thank you. Dr. Anderson. Thank you. If you recall not too long ago I sat with you with a parent of a secondary student who while she was very encouraged by what was happening at the elementary level, her question to you and I guess by some extent to me in the room were, what about my son? He's already in the 11th grade.

[02:51:25] What are we going to do to capture the help that he needs? because we did not have a program for students at the secondary level at that point so this is definitely needed and so thank you for bringing this and sharing one of the things that I'd be looking for is how are we seeing this translate into some of the other data that we collect such as not necessarily just grades but other assessments such as the SOL and the grades in which they're administered which I believe are 7th 8th and 10th for language as well as you know impact on graduation rates once we get there I know we're a little bit ahead of that

[02:52:03] and Mr. Frisch also kind of hit one of the points that I wanted to talk about are we seeing these data results consistently across the across all of our schools are we seeing that some schools are more effective or more successful than others I wonder would you be able to provide that yes ma'am we'll ask the teams to provide them.

[02:52:29] Okay, thank you. Another thing that I want to share, and, you know, I taught eighth grade English, so this is kind of a passion. When I walked into Annandale High School, this was a couple of years ago, and Mr. DeRose was taking me around, there was actually a teacher at a kidney table doing small group work.

[02:52:48] That is the impactful work that must happen. some of the strategies that are really effective and productive at the elementary level, for some reason they get dropped when students pivot into secondary. And bringing back that small group intervention work is so key to ensuring that every child really gets what they need. And so hearing what the reading specialist talked about really makes me feel comforted and assured that we're going to see that kind of growth but I will also challenge you as you in some of these documents

[02:53:24] you talk about some of the specific strategies for our MLs and for our students with disabilities you already know I'm going with this we have other underperforming groups so I want to make sure that they're also continue to be part of the conversation in an elevated way not just kind of captured wholesale per se and so i i want to continue to to ask you to do that but this is a very good start and i'm looking forward to seeing some of that data thank you

[02:53:56] thank you dr reed this was quite good and very promising information uh and i really like to see our seniors and higher graders uh reading my both my boys very avid readers and um and and this stays with them all their life right like so understanding and I think with with the more the tech we are using in life in general we all are on computers and in the writing and reading kind

[02:54:31] of slows down after you've become adults with actual books unless you're in a book club or you have a passion to read so this is a great way to start that I just had a couple of questions on in the presentation the slide for I saw the improvement very much in the grade 7 grade 8 and then kind of the map growth goes a little bit down in the higher grade so will you speak to that yes ma'am I believe that there's not the same amount of required testing in the upper grades but I'm gonna phone a

[02:55:09] friend and have to have dr presidio um illuminate that for us well that's a great question thank you miss dixit uh first of all just a couple things to note one of the things that dr reed did mention in the presentation is that we are seeing greater growth at the eighth grade because some of the students are transitioning into middle school from elementary school where they've had the benefit of the enhanced instructional practices what we refer to as evidence-based literacy instruction and additional intervention supports and services so that's one of the factors the other factor is you'll notice there are different assessments that are used at the different grade levels

[02:55:46] and we do less frequent assessment as dr reed said for students at high school so at the high school level we have really good diagnostic data on students as they come to us from middle school and we're able to screen less frequently so it's a different assessment it's a different scale and the students have not had as much of benefit from some of the elementary interventions and supports that the middle school students have received. Thank you for the answer on the slide five there's the red reducing the red or shrinking red we are saying and again on this slide too the

[02:56:22] grade 11 has negative of 13 13 percent I guess so if it's negative of 13 percent on the on the other slide when going green it should kind of correlate i just felt that was a little off so these were the students at risk versus i think all students in the green chart so i'm going to have dr presidio clarify that but it's a perhaps a different slice of the same uh the same dynamic

[02:56:59] well i'm not going to clarify too much i'm just going to re uh state what dr reed said so mathematically we're looking at the students in the red reducing the risk those are just students that were already uh demonstrating risk so it's the percentage reduction of that not of the whole so you're not going to be able to total that up with the students um in the green and the green is uh the small percentage of the whole okay all right and then it says uh data of into 2025 to to winter 2026 for your student risk.

[02:57:30] So are we like predicting this because we are not in 2026 yet, winter? - No, these are results from the winter, this winter of 2026, as compared to last winter. - Oh, so winter of 2026.

[02:57:46] - Yeah, yeah. - Okay, sorry. Calendar, not calendar year, school year. - That's right, not school year. - Yes, ma'am. - No, I got it. So yeah, but it's really promising to see that, you know, the great result. And also, obviously, we're seeing more students taking APN, IBN, you know, accelerated courses, coursework, and FCPS right now.

[02:58:05] And I think it's a lot to do with our great instruction. So thank you for this, and we continue to see great things happening in our school. Thank you, Saqshari. Thank you, Ms. Dixit. Mr. Dannon. Good evening.

[02:58:22] Again, kudos to you and the instructional services team for all the work getting here. I really appreciate the sentiment about being focused and relentless in pursuit of a strategy. And I've heard from a lot of teachers around professional development. And I'd love to have another conversation at some point to understand the full landscape.

[02:58:38] But what I do appreciate and what I've heard from a lot of educators is around, you know, they can make a lot of things work. But the challenge is if you change it every year, it's a lot more difficult to do that. And so, you know, I appreciate, again, you all being relentlessly focused and strategic.

[02:58:55] I also appreciate you flagging the inclusive 10th grade AP seminar, that was really 100%, that's a lot, can't get any better than that. I did have a couple questions just for my own edification, so can you talk

a little bit about how the screeners and assessments mentioned are administered, the VALS and IREADY, are they on a computer and then how frequently are they given?

[02:59:16] Yes sir, we can describe that, so Dr. Presidio? great question in a somewhat complicated system because there's variants obviously across the grade levels so at the middle school level we're administering the iReady assessment as a screening assessment which basically is a computer administered assessment it's more efficient that way and reduces teacher work time it's also more reliable and valid that way and it allows us to identify students that might be at risk of demonstrating literacy needs for additional support then the vowels assessment is

[02:59:54] administered and that is not computer adaptive that has actual teacher direct instruction and assessment interactions with the students and that's a diagnostic assessment so we're using that to actually identify what particular needs do students that are at risk have are they more phonological needs phonics needs are they more fluency needs are they more comprehension needs and that That allows us to develop reading plans to target instruction and intervention support to the actual needs of those individual students.

[03:00:25] That's a similar process to what we use at the high school level, but we use a different assessment tool there. We use the measure of academic progress or the MAP assessment at the high school level. I appreciate it. And I recognize there's a growing body of research around the benefits of digital instructional materials versus paper-based.

[03:00:45] I'm not asking about instructional materials, but testing materials. you aware of any research around how students perform whether it's a digitally administered exam or paper-based exam so all of the assessments that we administer do have an evidence base behind them so I mean it's really going to vary on the particular assessment instrument that we're using but the general field of education looks at screening assessments again really to yield a smaller amount of students that we need to perform the more teacher directed and focused diagnostic assessments with because

[03:01:22] that's where we're going to spend a lot of time effort and energy to collect that information these individual assessments sometimes can take 30 minutes or more per student and we give them multiple times across the course of the school year because we want to actually track and monitor the progress so systematically we do need a combination of tools that provide that efficiency paired with those tools that are going to give us that really deep instructional information.

[03:01:47] Appreciate it. Can you talk a little bit about the, you mentioned the frequency of those exams being administered. What's the rationale behind the frequency of those and what's the rationale behind the frequency of these exams being administered at the cadence that they are?

[03:02:03] Yeah, again, it's going to depend on the particular assessment, but typically we're looking at quarterly assessments because we want to actually have sufficient information to make sure that students are making progress so that we can adjust supports if necessary but at the same time you don't want to over assess because you want to have enough time between assessments to actually adjust instruction and have students be able to benefit from that instruction so as a general kind of rule of thumb we're really talking about quarterly assessments got okay i promised i had to go off script but i recognize we're talking about secondary education and i recognize a lot of secondary teachers have time to to you know look at those

[03:02:41] results for the primary age group is that I've heard like with benchmark for example it's incredibly important that teachers have a regular cadence of reviewing those and adapting as needed can you speak to that a little bit what that looks like so the the system is really the same in terms of the diagnostic and screening assessments at the elementary just in terms of the cadence but benchmark has another type of assessment that we look at which is more content based assessments or curriculum based measures and those are based on the content that teachers are teaching as part of the curriculum so

[03:03:19] there are different assessments and we have what we refer to as a balanced assessment framework so we look at skills based assessments do you have actually in this case obviously in literacy do you have the the core reading skills that you need to have phonics decoding skills comprehension skills fluency skills but then you also need to mention master the content that's being taught and we use curriculum based measures what's referred to as curriculum based measures for that and at elementary those are through our benchmark curriculum and then at the secondary level they're through our secondary curriculum which is HMH or SAVAS depending on the grade level and the teachers need time to review those at a regular cadence especially again at

[03:03:56] the at the elementary level or what's the risk if an exam is administered and teacher that doesn't have sufficient time to review well then they're not going to have as much ability to respond appropriately right so again that's one of the reasons for using computer-based assessments is for efficiency purposes because then teachers don't have to score all of those assessments actually sort through all of the data they just get the report in terms of you know being able to actually get an entire class view and an individual student view in terms of how students are progressing on the skills based assessments I I appreciate it.

[03:04:36] And then lastly, so you mentioned about the improvement for 8th graders. We were all, I mean, when we first saw that, it was pretty impressive. Can you talk a little bit about the influence you had mentioned about that, why that was so different? And I think I know the answer, but it's very helpful, I think, for folks to hear, like I mentioned at the top, the importance of being relentlessly focused and implementing something we know is going to work.

[03:04:56] Right. So I think as Dr. Presidio mentioned earlier, 8th graders and 7th and 8th graders actually had the benefit of a little bit more work at the elementary that's been more recent work given I think mr. Frisch's comments on when that work around literacy began the equitable access to literacy work in Fairfax County and the school board at the time actually I think had great foresight in thinking about moving to explicit direct instruction even before the Commonwealth did so I think you know we really appreciate that level of advocacy

[03:05:35] I those were back in the early days I think mr. Frisch mentioned Miss Marin was one of the early advocates and we had many community partners I know both locally here in Fairfax and across the country that have really expected us to get back to some of those really core building block steps of an early literacy program so I think we're gonna as we see this wave of students our current eighth graders moving next year to high school or in Robinson's case that we saw having a secondary school where they stay on campus and we continue we expect to continue to see that progress and as we see our

[03:06:15] youngest learners coming through elementary we really expect to see sort of that flywheel, really catching, I mean, it'll be exciting to have really strong readers, I think, as we move through, and strong writers.

[03:06:32] I'm really proud of the amount of reading and writing our young people are doing. I'll start it with a forum topic. Yes. Launched. Mr. Dunn. I can't tell you how excited I am about this program.

[03:06:51] I think if you went back and watched previous meetings, I've asked you two or three times about what happens to the kids in middle school and high school, and this is a perfect response. And I can't tell you how important it is to support these students, some of whom have started in FCPS, others who arrive on our shores from other places where they might not have gotten any formal education or their schooling might not have been as robust as what we provide here in Fairfax County but I can tell you my sister being an

[03:07:29] English teacher and having spent enormous time helping one student learn to read and that enabled that student to graduate from high school what a tremendous difference it makes not just in the lives of that one student but in the lives of their family it provides access and opportunity economic and otherwise as well as just allowing you know intellectual exploration of all the amazing things that you can find in your local public library so root to our local public libraries. I just want to, I don't have any questions, but I'm just so excited about

[03:08:01] this and the data that you've provided, which shows concrete progress. And I hope that at the high school level that we can accelerate that progress a little bit, especially for all the kids who didn't have the benefits of the science of reading approach that we've implemented at elementary level but i i do hope is is this intended to just be a transitional program or is this intended to be a permanent feature of fcps going forward given that we do get influxes of students from outside the county at the middle and high school level so great question mr don i think

[03:08:40] one of the things that we need to be thoughtful about is that um the real work in the school division happens in the classroom and so we want to make sure that that iterative process is there that we hear from our educators as you did this evening what tools are they finding helpful and what I'm hearing and I think what Dr. Presidio is hearing is that the materials we have been recently providing around English language development and our literacy tools

[03:09:19] with the Orton Gillingham work and support work as intervention work that those are working they are important so we want to make sure those become part of our instruction moving forward. I think what we don't want to do is start and stop and start and stop if we find something that's research based and it's best practice then it needs to become part of our toolkit.

[03:09:41] And that's why we're also so excited that our educator retention rates are so strong because it's really expensive to provide professional development, for example, for Oregon-Gillingham or GLAAD strategies or PSYOP strategies or learning new curricula like our English language development curriculum.

[03:10:01] So, for example, the budget that passed this evening provides, you know, consistent collective bargaining support, which is going to keep our educators here who've had the training who we've invested in. So I'm excited both about that professional development side as well as the resources and we have to keep those moving along parallel tracks if we're going to continue to support students.

[03:10:27] I think that's such an important point that, you know, my understanding historically is that FCPS has relied on a lot of young teachers, giving them a lot of great training and then they all go elsewhere. And if we invest in teachers, then we do have to keep them, right?

[03:10:45] Because it's not just attracting, it's retaining, and it's that retention which is the key to developing a world-class workforce, which we have, thankfully, by reducing reliance on that influx of new teachers, even though we have a very large school system relying more on people who will dedicate their careers or lives to living in Fairfax County and benefiting from quality of life and continuing to invest their time and effort and and love um and and their students is so important thank you thank you um so i don't have a question i just want to first of

[03:11:20] all commend the team for all the work they did to make this happen the teachers down on the ground i think the video showed the excitement of the teachers which obviously transfers to the kids um and the conversation we had today dr we were talking about you know budget and investment and And I think that even though we had a severe budget shortfall last year, you focused on what matters.

[03:11:46] And by focusing on what matters, then we get these results. And I think that your work and the staff and the teachers down on the ground are seeing the results and our students are benefiting.

[03:12:04] So I just want to thank everyone for the work that they did because I know this is hard work. but when you see that kind of enthusiasm from teachers you know that the kids are getting that and they're picking up on it and the fact that at the leadership level the foresight was like yes we've had budget cuts but let's focus on what really matters and i really appreciate that that yes we would love to do more but if we can't because we don't have enough then let's just put it where it really matters and this is a great example of that so thank you thank you

[03:12:39] Thank you Dr. Reed. Agenda item nine, consent agenda. Our adopted rules of parliamentary procedure Roberts rules provide for a consent agenda listing several items for approval by the board by the board by a single motion. Many items listed have gone through board review and documentation has been provided to all board members in the public in advance. Items may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member prior to the meeting.

[03:13:06] The consent agenda items are on the screen. Is there any objection to approving the consent agenda? hearing and seeing no objection the consent agenda is approved agenda item 10 new business the following are new business items there will not be a vote on these items this evening but action is scheduled at a future meeting agenda item 11 board committee reports i call on mr mckelveen for a report of the audit committee thank you we had a very quick audit meeting uh this past week uh where we discussed audit plan as usual welcomed our new member uh mr dannon to

[03:13:42] to the committee. I call on Mr. Frisch for a report of the admin committee. We had a very long meeting that's going to take me a long time to report on. I'm kidding. We finished two things. I'm grateful to committee members for their assistance. One, actually we finished one thing.

[03:14:03] Two things. No, I was right. The first thing we will be discussing soon as a board. It was a closed matter and the second we approved a slate of standard operating procedures for the school board office that the board will be taking a look at.

[03:14:19] So very much appreciate colleagues' willingness to engage in that work and look forward to our next meeting. I call on Ms. Marin for a report of the governance committee. The governance committee's May 19th meeting ended up with the committee sending to the full board the calendar policy.

[03:14:39] We made tremendous headway and resolved a lot of questions that have been brought up in the work session. So it is listed tonight as new business and action for June 11th. There are a handful of topics

where members will likely be bringing some amendments. So stay tuned for that.

[03:14:55] And I did just see the final version. So it should be if it's not up tonight, I believe it is. And then we also looked a little bit at the artificial intelligence innovation in technology policy there was a version that the committee had produced and we shared two versions from another member but there was not an abundance of time to discuss this so the committee is looking at having an additional meeting we did try to schedule to this May but people weren't available so we just had this one which was our last scheduled one but we are looking to add another one to go

[03:15:30] through that so to be continued about the upcoming meeting and we also sent the committee did send policy 6220 on data security back to the superintendent for our final review column mr. McDaniel for a board of the comprehensive planning or comprehensive development and planning committee thank you we met two days ago it's a second meeting where our new community members were had to see the table they provided invaluable feedback on policies that we were discussing we move forward three policies and that will be sent to the full school board leasing of school facilities site planning and development and wireless

[03:16:09] telecom facilities and on the one policy where we need a little bit more work the environmental policy we decided to use a tool that's in the governance manual where committees can actually appoint small working groups so we're going to get some of those community experts at the table and work with staff to put some final tweaks on that environmental policy and hopefully come back in June for final approval agenda item 12 superintendent matters I call dr. Reed thank you madam chair a couple things just as shout outs I'm really proud of our communications team they received two capital Emmy award

[03:16:47] nominations one for their girls flag football be a trailblazer get in the game which was nominated in the content shorts category and that's not shorts as in uniform. I believe that's shorts as in short film. And we're really excited about that. That video captured how our new program builds confidence, teamwork, leadership, and connection for our student-athletes. And the second one was for Touching History, which was nominated in the Historical Cultural News category, featuring the ribbon-cutting for Louise Archer Elementary

[03:17:24] school's renovation project in detailing some of the history involved. So big props to our communications team. I also want to give a shout out to Herndon Middle School's very own Fannie Salazar Lasky, who was honored at the Herndon 40th Annual Mayor's Volunteer Appreciation Reception with the Distinguished Service Award. And she received a special recognition from Mayor Kevin LeBlanc for her outstanding community service as part of the heroes among us initiative. So congratulations Fannie and thank you to all of our family

[03:17:59] liaisons who work so hard to support our students at every one of our schools across the county. Mount Vernon High School has a lot to celebrate as well with our orchestra director there Alberto Rodriguez who has recently been selected as one of 202 quarter-finalists for the 2027 Grammy Music Educator Award and this award is presented there were over 2100 applications nationwide so semifinals will be announced in September and I don't know about the rest of you but mr. Rodriguez is definitely my odds-on favorite we're

[03:18:38] really proud of him and all of the work they've done and madam chair I've visited a number of schools saw a number of musicals we have so many talented young people it's just and those educators

theater support staff just your magic and you're able to have our young people create just incredible work I also loved visiting Edison Academy I met three young men recently who were state champions and they were sporting large medals in HVAC internet working and t-shirt

[03:19:13] designs. And so just really proud of our state champion students who've really shown what's possible in our skilled trades as well. The last thing I just want to comment on, I was really pleased. Coach Dick Adams in Mr. Tom Horan's office for district activities and athletics invited me out to the first annual in a long time. And he had a football coaches showcase at Robinson Secondary School which was held by our Northern Virginia Coaches Association and I was

[03:19:46] really proud to see our coaches working together. There were over 250 student athletes from all over our county and more than 40 of our coaches that put this program on to help students understand a little bit about what a combine might feel like and look like and there were college coaches from all of the various collegiate levels on hand to actually evaluate the talents showcased and it was just a tremendous opportunity for our young student athletes and our coaches it was really a highlight that evening so madam chair I as we approach graduation season I just want to

[03:20:25] encourage our graduates to be our staff and our families to extend one another a little grace These times can be stressful as well as joyful. So I just look forward to celebrating with all of our seniors here in the coming weeks.

[03:20:41] So thank you. Thank you, Dr. Reed. Agenda item 13, board matters. Next on the agenda is board matters. I'll call on each school board member to speak. We're going to kick things off with Mr. Dannon. Just learned tonight.

[03:20:57] I guess that's random who gets to start. Oh, I changed. Oh, gosh, I need to be ready. All right, well, I, thank you. I started off my morning over at Keen Mill Elementary School and got to welcome their new principal, Kathy Wood. And she came very highly recommended, and I know the folks at Laurel Ridge are going to miss her dearly, but she's going to do great things, and I'm looking forward to working with her.

[03:21:18] So congrats to Mrs. Wood. I want to also thank, last night I got to make a couple stops to check out the, first at the Irving Middle School's garden party with my colleague Mr. Moon, and he was smarter than I. I ate dinner before I got there, and he got to go and actually enjoy some of the food that the kids grew at the school.

[03:21:37] And if you've never been to Irving, you haven't been there recently, in their inner gardens, they have chickens. They've got a whole bunch of vegetables and stuff that they're growing. And apparently there are two box turtles that somehow made their way there and are just roaming free around the school, which is so cool.

[03:21:54] And the tour guides were two eighth grade students and they were so proud of their work and it was such a beautiful, great thing to see. And so congrats to them. We also got to stop by the, we didn't stop by, we were there the whole time, for the boundary discussion, and, you know, I recognize it's an emotional topic, it's actually the very first thing, I joke sometimes, I'm a PTA dad that got a little bit too involved in his kid's school, and now I find myself on the school board, but the thing that kicked that off was boundaries, and our schools, we had concerns about our boundaries changing, and so, you know, I do

want to share, it's something that we take very seriously, you know, we are looking for the best solution, there's not going to be a solution that's perfect,

[03:22:32] but we are going to work very hard to hear from everybody and leave no stone unturned and gather that feedback and balance everything and do what we can to make our schools better for our kids. So appreciate folks that joined that.

[03:22:47] Congrats to the 26 FCPS students who won first place awards at the 2026 Virginia Future Business Leaders of America State Leadership Conference and to the more than 90 students who placed in the top four in their event with Braddock students represented well on the list. Special shout out to Sienna Wade of Robinson, who was awarded the Marguerite Crumley Scholarship, and oops, my computer wants to update.

[03:23:07] Snooze and remind me again in one hour. Who was awarded the Marguerite Crumley Scholarship, and Menes Puri of Lake Braddock, who received the Frank Manning Peel Scholarship. Congratulations also to the Braddock winners of the Hispanic Leadership Alliance Scholarships, Brooklyn Aguilar from Lake Braddock, and Kaylee Morales Campos from West Springfield High School.

[03:23:24] So congrats to all. And I'll share with this if I've got a few seconds. With graduation season coming upon us, before I forget, I do want to note to graduates that advice that got shared to me when I was about that same age. Life is not about finding yourself. It's about deciding who you want to be and what you want to do.

[03:23:41] And you have that choice. And graduation is a great time to reflect on that. So congrats to all and good luck with your finals. Ms. Dixit. Hello, everyone. It's been a very busy month of May. And I appreciate the opportunity to meet with many community members throughout the various community meetings held during this process.

[03:24:03] Thanks to everyone who has taken time to attend, share feedback, ask thoughtful questions and voice concerns, especially around the Skyview boundary. We're listening to all of you and making sure that we take the right decision when we vote on it.

[03:24:21] There's a lot of excitement about the new high school and I'm happy to share that Skyview High School has official mascot is the Aviator. The school colors are teal, black and white and huge congratulations to all our future aviators.

[03:24:38] I got a chance to visit Crossville Elementary School and one of the highlights was my visit was watching kindergarten student participating in the introduction to color code STEM activity using small programmable robots. Student enthusiastically explored early coding concept through teamwork, problem solving, and interactive learning activity that encouraged both creativity and critical thinking.

[03:25:04] They were doing a paper activity, by the way, with the robot. It was not on computer. And I also appreciate learning more about how CrossFit Elementary support the FCPS, Portrait of the Graduate Vision. I also visited Colleen Powell Elementary School with my colleague, Miss Sandy Anderson, and was impressed by the engagement and enthusiasm of students in the Korean Immersion Program.

[03:25:27] Korean Immersion Program, two classrooms we went to. Students were writing, learning science in Korean language, also writing in English, there were no computers inside. So we do have great things happening in our classroom. We just need to go there and see.

[03:25:44] Congratulations to Sully's student, T. Titus Err, a senior at Shantley High School at the 2026 VSP Board of Directors Regional Scholarship recipient for the VSPA Northeastern Region. Congratulations to the 2026 Shark Tank Technology Challenge winner, Meghna Nanapaneni from Shangri High School for her winning project Sage for Health, which is dedicated to promoting cognitive wellness and reducing social isolation among seniors.

[03:26:15] And this is really a very good topic. Congratulations to Vidula Bharat from Senderville High School, who is a winner of the School Board Character Scholarship Award. I met Vidula this morning and told her about this, that she won this award, and she was very excited to hear that.

[03:26:35] Congratulations to Cadet Ganjili, who received the AFJROTC Cadet Leadership Award for Region 4, Sub-Region 5. Cadet Ganjili was also named the winner of this award for all Region 4.

[03:26:52] Congratulations to Kalari, our student, ADP. And I'm going to stop here because what's going on. Thank you so much. Ms. St. John Cunning. So, good evening, everyone. It has been a long month.

[03:27:07] I've been to plays, I've been to openings, ribbon cuttings, meetings, boundary meetings, but I did prepare remarks for our last meeting for Teacher Appreciation Week, and so I am going to do that late because I think that is more important than hearing about all the things I've been to.

[03:27:26] So when we talk about teacher appreciation, we often think of the academic milestones, the test scores or the graduation rates. but as someone who has spent years in our schools and neighborhoods, I see something much deeper. I see the heart of our community. Teachers, you are more than instructors. You are the first responders to our children's needs and the steady hands that guide them through an increasingly complex world. Every person can remember a teacher who impacted their life. I know that in Fairfax County, some teachers have actually saved lives. In Fairfax County, we pride ourselves on excellence,

[03:28:03] But excellence isn't just a curriculum. It's a connection. It's the teacher who notices a student is unusually quiet and pulls them aside to check in on them. It's the educator who spends their own time and resources to ensure every child, regardless of their zip code or background, has what they need to succeed.

[03:28:24] You don't just teach subjects. You teach resilience. You teach empathy. You teach our children that they belong and that their voices matter. But let me be clear, appreciation must be more than a week of snacks in the break room or a kind email.

[03:28:41] Real appreciation means advocating for you as professionals. It means ensuring you have the livable wages, the mental health support, and the manageable workloads you deserve so you can continue to pour into our kids without pouring from an empty cup.

[03:28:58] To our educators, thank you for your patience, your brilliance, and your unwavering belief in the potential of every student who walks through your doors you are the architects of our future i see you i value you and i am so incredibly grateful for you and i know that every student that you touch is just as grateful for you as i am buenas noches mr mackleby thank

[03:29:28] you um so over the past uh week our community has um noted two two passings um folks that are very close to this board in our entire community. So Rob Hain, who's been a prolific worker in the baseball community for many years and a friend to many of us on the Athletic Council passed, and I know

we'll be honoring him in the next week or so. And then yesterday we learned of the passing of Doug Martin, who was the longtime band director at Langley, also touching educators around

[03:30:05] the county as well as students so we will miss both of them i will highlight that we are coming into cappy's season very much looking forward to that at its new venue this year over the past few weeks like dr reed and many of my colleagues have been able to get to a number of musicals i was able to see grease at langley anastasia tj nine to five at south lakes with several colleagues Anything Goes at Oakton, Midsummer Night's Dream at Annandale, and Something Rotten at Fairfax.

[03:30:37] And they were all fabulous and look forward to seeing the students honored. And most importantly, I wish Mr. Moon the best of luck as we embark on our graduation competition this year. Ms. Marin.

[03:30:53] Good evening. I'm looking forward tomorrow to a new event I've never been to. It's the Geography Bee at Marshall High School. And I'm bringing a special guest, my husband, who is a geographer. So I don't know if that counts as a date in high school, but it'll be the most we've seen each other in days anyway.

[03:31:12] So I'm looking forward to all the graduations, trying to stay physically healthy during that. And yeah, just wishing everyone a great end of the school year where I know things can get a little hectic and the kids can get very excited. So thank you to our principals and teachers who are holding down the forts to bring us all home for the school year.

[03:31:31] Thank you. - Mr. McDaniel. - Thank you this morning, this afternoon, rather, I toured Aldrin Elementary, and when I left, the principal gave me a little goodie bag, and in it were two moon pies. And I was like, why is there a moon pie in there? And then it hit me, Buzz Aldrin. Oh, there's a connoisseur of dad jokes. I love this. But that's in addition to tours at Mosaic Madison, you know, Crossfield Ribbon Cuttings, and SEPTA Awards, and the Fox Mill Matsuri, all over the place these last few weeks. On another note that Mr. McElveen

[03:32:08] mentioned i did want to pause for a moment to remember the life of rob honey um you know rob was a langley high school graduate he spent his entire adult life giving back to the community that shaped him and he coached at westfield the baseball team they're winning a regional championship and finishing second in the state in his final season and then he retired in 2023 however in 2024 when the langley baseball coach job came open he took came out of retirement and took it saying it was the only job he would consider taking his impact went far beyond any one school he served as executive director in order to travel baseball league chair of the

[03:32:45] fairfax county baseball council served on the board of the american baseball coaches association and represented baseball on the athletic council his impact to baseball and the sports community in northern virginia and fairfax county cannot be overemphasized youth sports were always he viewed youth sports has always been about the kids first and the scoreboard second and for thousands of young people who learned the game and something more about character, his watcher is lasting legacies. So I would hope my colleagues would join me tonight in sending our thoughts and prayers to his family, the Westfield and Langley communities, and the Northern Virginia baseball community.

[03:33:22] Mr. Frisch. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. McElveen, for mentioning Langley's production of Grease. Little known fact, the last time Langley had a production of Grease was 30 years ago uh and it it

resulted in a cappy award nominee uh for the very first cappy award this is 31 years ago and that person is even my partner um speaking of theater the last time i was in this room was between this meeting and the last meeting and there was a yellow brick road going up the aisle

[03:33:59] there um and let me tell you how talented our middle school theater students are um it had everything you could possibly think of in a production of the wizard of oz mr moon and i were there together there was a marionette dog uh like toto thank you i mean they're gonna take my gay card um i didn't know a character from the wizard of oz um there was a marionette toto and

[03:34:30] the student, I don't know, puppeteer, was insanely talented. The acting was fantastic. Miss Stacy did a great job with the students who were helping with the set and with the production as well as the actors. She always does. If you've never been to a production here, you know, this room hosts a lot of very talented students in addition to these school board meetings and it's just one more reason why our middle school theater programs are so important in addition this month recently I had an opportunity to celebrate our union educators

[03:35:09] and staff at the nova labor tribute to labor dinner I attended the VSBA regional meeting where I saw one of our students win the five thousand dollar scholarship which was exciting as well as one of our middle schoolers win the art contest also attended a boundary meeting with with Dr. Anderson for the Graham Road Elementary School boundary, specifically the Kingsley Commons, Greenway Downs, Jefferson Village, City Park Homes communities, visited the old

[03:35:41] Oakton Schoolhouse, and was delighted to have a historical presentation from a Gold Award up-and-comer for scouting from Madison High School, and bumped into former Supervisor Linda Smith along the way. And I think I will leave it there other than to say we have more community meetings coming up around the boundary conversation, so I'm looking forward to those and connecting with folks. And I'd like to encourage, I've put this in my newsletter already, encourage

[03:36:16] people to apply for Congressman James Walkinshaw's first Youth Leadership Council. It's a program for students in grades 9 to 12 for who live in Virginia's 11th congressional district to help them build leadership civic engagement skills discuss community issues as well it is a perfect bookend to our our ending school board student leadership program so I hope the students who've been joining us this past year will take part in that as well to further grow their leadership skills and I will leave it there thank you Dr. Anderson thank you Mr. Frisch stole my thunder I

[03:36:55] even had a picture of that yellow brick road it was really really cute and the dog that was just amazing awesome but I do want to start to say by publicly for the first time saying congratulations to our new chief of schools Megan Broman and also saying thank you to Dr. Ponce for his service even though I'm sure we'll have another opportunity.

[03:37:16] Also, we'd like to welcome the newest regional assistant superintendent for Region 6, Ms. Rhonda Honoree. She will be supporting Annandale High School in the Mason District. Earlier this week, Mr. McElveen and I had the opportunity to hear from some very passionate Falls Church High School students, as well as Mason residents who were speaking about their advocacy for solar energy.

[03:37:40] And they really were interested in terms of the board's continued commitment to that work. They are interested in the progress to date and what the obstacles are and what they can do to be helpful in that. When it was shared that we've had some delays in terms of losing certain grants this year from the

federal government that have helped with our electric buses. So that was very informative. Also attended a number of shows from the play here to Midsummer Night's Dream at Annandale High School, the Annandale Pyramid Art Show, Beetlejuice at Glasgow, Wizard of Oz,

[03:38:18] the Global Action Showcase at Lake Braddock in which Mr. McElveen was a speaker, which was wonderful to see all of the great things that our students are doing, as well as the Boundary Community Meetings for Falls Church with Mr. Frisch, FCPS Retirement Ceremony at TJ.

[03:38:38] Lots has happened. As well as Bryant High School, I attended the teacher appreciation breakfast, and I want to pause here to share that it was not cognizant to me that we have some schools that do not have PTAs and therefore are not able to really support the teachers during these appreciation weeks.

[03:39:04] and Bryant is one of them and had it not been for someone else raising that to my attention it's not something that came to mind at all so I just want to kind of put a plug into all of our consciousness because we do have a number of schools that don't have your traditional PTAs and so they are left out of these celebrations and if there's a way to fill that gap I'd like for us to be considerate of that so I was very excited for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated for coming forward and filling the gap for Bryant High School

[03:39:40] last week during Teacher Appreciation Week and thank you to a former assistant principal there Marilyn Moore who spearheaded that entire effort. I do want to share that I had two opportunities very recently and on that note at Justice high school where I was interviewed by the students for the verdict who were ruthless in their questioning there were no softballs so I'm looking forward to that article as well as I had the opportunity to present to the theory of theory of knowledge class with mrs. Gunther she invited me to speak and students had questions about all types of principles that are related to the

[03:40:19] theory of knowledge but as related to our board governance our approach to budget just essentially all of the decision making that goes into the work of a school board member so thank you mrs gunther and i look forward to the article from the verdict everyone have a good night mr moon thank you madam chair since we have to go back to a close meeting that i'm going to make my remark short something that has not been mentioned is heritage night at luther jackson i was there you were i saw you there i saw you there and also spring dance showcase at fairfax high

[03:40:54] school, Fairfax Academy. You know, one of the things that I don't do well or I don't do at all is dancing. So that is why I love watching others dance and students at the Fairfax Academy exhibiting their talents in doing different types of dance. I very, very, very much enjoyed it.

[03:41:18] Mr. Dannon, you're my district school board member. So I'm going to give you a tip. If you follow me around you get fed in every every single event because I pick events where they serve good food including fresh vegetables from schools garden with that a Mr. McAlbin I only have 25 graduations on my calendar I don't know how many you have if you have more than 25 you let me know so that I can schedule more thank you Miss Lady thank you um I want to offer congratulations to the

[03:41:57] of the selection of Mr. Trevor Williams as the next principal of Herndon Middle School. Mr. Williams is an experienced educational leader with a decade of service and education with principal experience at both the middle and high, middle school and elementary school levels. Guided by the belief

in always doing what is best for kids, he is known for his student center leadership, commitment to instructional excellence and success in school transformations.

[03:42:20] He will begin on my birthday, June 10. So I will visit Herndon Middle, hopefully that day to welcome him. Also, I've been busy, I won't repeat a lot of the things my colleagues have mentioned, but I have also enjoyed seeing the culmination of the year-long work for Lighthouse Schools.

[03:42:41] It was exciting to watch that work. Also, the inclusion work, that showcase was fantastic. I want to offer congratulations to Gigi Fernandez for representing Drainsville in the Student Leadership Development Program.

[03:42:57] they had a fantastic mock work session a few nights ago student leadership development program has been an inspiring example of what happens when young people are empowered to lead with purpose and vision also had a great conversation with McLean citizen Association want to thank dr. Reed and mr. Gordon chief of facilities for joining me in that conversation congratulations to drainsville winners of the international science engineering fair I will put your names and your projects in my newsletter and then just say you know congratulations and actually not a congratulations an

[03:43:33] appreciation for what we are about to embark on Memorial Day very proud of the fact both my my brother and my father served in the army I'm just grateful to live in a free country and thankful to the men and women who continue to fight for our freedom to make that happen so wishing everybody a wonderful Memorial weekend. For those who celebrate, wishing you and your family a blessed and joyous Eid al-Daha.

[03:43:58] Thank you. Last week, I sent a message to the board with two drafts of two policies that were my personal policy thoughts related to the use of educational technologies in our division. Those first drafts were included in the recent governance committee agenda, which I think gave the community the wrong impression. Because this effort has followed a different path than our usual model or models that we've used in the past we haven't had exactly the same structured opportunities for individual board members to contribute their thinking through this process attending those governance meetings has been a

[03:44:35] priority for me but it isn't always possible to be there at every one and there isn't always a natural opening to contribute meaningful in that format and when I did send the drafts I wanted I want to be clear that those were just my initial thoughts somehow it seems that I've been painted as the pro-tech viewpoint for our board and I can I actually understand why that's happened well I was in academia my scholarly focus was computers and writing and I've always been extremely interest interested in the intersection of technology and education and honestly if I was still in the classroom I would be loving all the ways that I could help use AI to help students improve their

[03:45:12] critical thinking skills by being critical of the tool and as a lifelong learner I am thrilled to be learning as much so much of myself but those were college students and I'm an adult. Even with those college students I consistently considered every assignment and weighed the goal of technology in my classroom. I made sure we had tech free zones and we put away the computers a lot even when I taught in computer labs. I have no doubt that our teachers are doing the same things in our classrooms. As a parent I have the same concerns that many of you do about the role technology plays in the lives of my children and how to simultaneously ensure that they are ready for the possible the possible

[03:45:48] world that they are going to encounter outside the walls of our schools. That is all to say I want to reiterate to the community members who have reached out that I understand your concerns with my initial thoughts and I'm eager to work with you along with my colleagues to continue working on those ideas. To start that process I will be having a technology town hall on June 4th where I hope to gather a plethora of voices to share their thoughts so please look for an upcoming invitation for more information on how to join me. And with that the board will be We recessed at 10:45 to head back to closed.



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